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MARCH/APRIL 2012

LEGENDARY COMEDIAN ON HER 'OTHER' SELF, GAY CRUSHES AND GOING LESBIAN AGAIN WITH BABS

Joan Rivers Takes Off the Face

By Chris Azzopardi

Joan Rivers has never been one to question her actions. But today, she's doing just that: "I'm listening to Katy Perry and I don't know why."

Besides being a firework herself, Rivers has little in common with the ubiquitous pop tart. There's this, though: They've both kissed a girl and – as the legendary queen of snark (and facial reconfigurations) admits in our recent chat – liked it. So much, in fact, that she'd be up for some more lez loving. But for now Rivers is focused on promoting her wacky reality show, "Joan & Melissa: Joan Knows Best", now in its second season on WE tv.

In our interview, Rivers dished on the new installment (what if her daughter Melissa actually were a gay man?), how her humor's always been "gay," and her face – before she redid it.

I'm a big fan – but I'm sure every gay man tells you that.

No, no. No gay men tell me that.

I don't believe you.

Well, every now and again.

You know, I'm glad this isn't a face-to-face interview because, since you're a member of the "Fashion Police", you wouldn't approve of my outfit today.

You wouldn't approve of what I'm wearing right now, either! I'm wearing a stolen hotel bathrobe. One of those white bathrobes that say, "Don't take these." Somewhere along the line I did.

Do you always take things from hotels?

Yes. Always those little shampoos, little soaps, all those cute little things. Sewing kits – you can't get enough of those! *(Laughs)*

Which celebrity needs a little more gay fashion influence, and a little less?

Oh, I don't know. Every week it changes so much and Melissa (Rivers), the exec producer, throws a hundred pictures on the table and you start from scratch again, so it's always changing.

You've been doing press interviews for a long time. You must get the same questions. What are you sick of talking about?

No, you get different questions because they come from different people. It's like an audience: always different every night. That sounds funny, but it's true.

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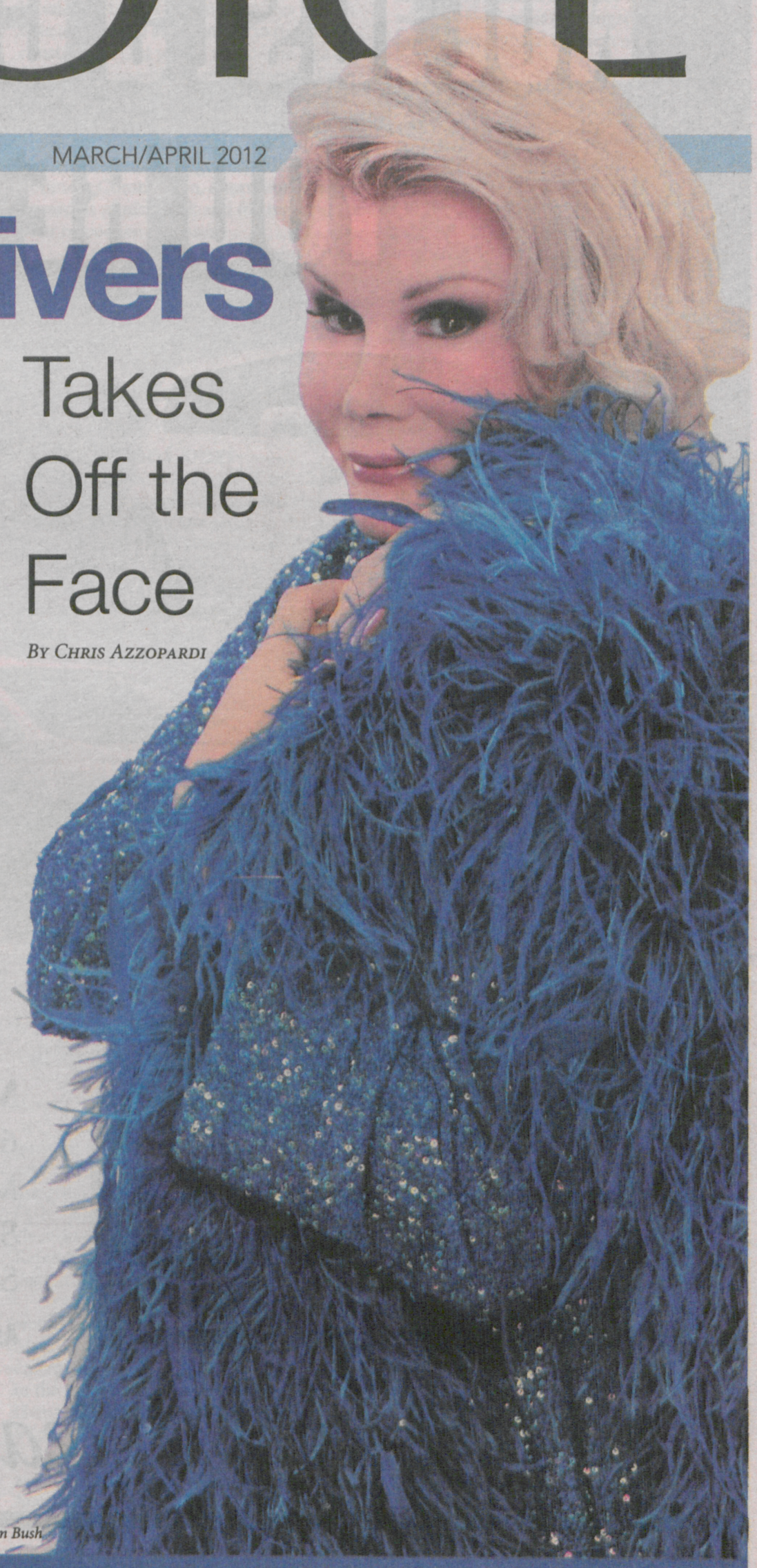

Photo credit: Charles William Bush

27th: Cheltenham Twp. Passes Non-discrimination Law

By Frank Pizzoli

WHO'LL BE THE 28th?

By a six to one vote Cheltenham Township, Montgomery County Feb. 15 adopted a non-discrimination ordinance spearheaded by Area Residents for Equality and other community groups. The lone "no" vote was based on what Commissioner Charles McKeown cited as his "religious beliefs".

Equality PA president Adrian Shanker told Central Voice the vote reflects what "residents want their township to be, a place where everyone is treated fairly." Other groups joining the effort were the local NAACP chapter, a United Church of Christ congregation, and Reformed Congregation of Israel.

Except for a few individuals who testified during public comment time that they did not believe discrimination existed and therefore the ordinance was unnecessary, the measure drew community support.

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Political Update

By Frank Pizzoli

Looking for Same-sex Health Care Coverage?

Somebody's listening. Early last month, the Department of Health and Human Services rolled out HealthCare.gov to search specifically for insurance plans that include coverage for same-sex domestic partners. The Health Plan Finder tool on HealthCare.gov allows consumers to compare the cost sharing and benefit choices of health plans and choose the best option to meet their needs. Domestic partners, including same-sex couples, can now filter plans that offer coverage for all members of their family.

Komen Decision Had No Effect Locally on Planned Parenthood

When nationally-known breast cancer organization Susan G. Komen for the Cure Foundation abruptly cut ties with Planned Parenthood centers across the nation, and within three days reversed that decision, Central Voice asked Planned Parenthood of Central Pennsylvania about local repercussions had their original decision been implemented. Komen cited a recently adopted policy of not provide funds to organizations under government investigation as is Planned Parenthood Federation of America when last October an investigation of the national organization was initiated by Rep. Cliff Stearns, R-Fla. That policy has been amended to exclude the type of investigation underway. "Planned Parenthood of Central Pennsylvania does not receive funds from the Susan G. Komen Foundation. So this decision would not have affected our patients directly," according to Suellen Craig, president, PPCP.

Prop. 8 Ruled Unconstitutional

Feb. 7, Prop. 8 was ruled unconstitutional by the 9th Circuit Court's opinion in Perry v. Brown. Proposition 8 is the 2008 voter-enacted ban on marriage equality in California. In addition, the appeals panel ruled that the proponents of Prop. 8 did have standing to pursue their appeal of Judge Walker's decision striking down the marriage ban, and upheld District Court Judge Ware's decision denying a stay to throw out Walker's ruling because he is gay. The ruling on constitutionality was divided on a 2-1 vote, with Judges Stephen Reinhardt and Michael Hawkins voting to strike Prop 8 down, and Judge N. Randy Smith voting to uphold the ban.

Allegheny County and Domestic Benefits

Allegheny County Chief Executive Rich Fitzgerald recently announced he will issue an executive order in keeping with his promise to implement same-sex domestic-partner benefits for county employees. Allegheny County will join major employers such as the 59 percent of Fortune 500 companies that provide domestic-partner benefits to their employees.

Smaller Legislature Says PA League of Women Voters

In a letter to the Pennsylvania General Assembly, the Pennsylvania League of Women Voters called on members to combine a proposed amendment to the state constitution that would reduce the size of the legislature with an amendment reforming how legislative districts are redrawn.

"The current system" the group says, "gives the leadership, which make up four of the five-member Legislative Reapportionment Commission, enormous power to reward or punish rank and file members of their respective caucuses."

The House State Government Committee has reported out H.B. 153, which would cut the size of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives by 50 members, from the current 203 to 153.

Gov. Christie Nominates Gay, Black Mayor to NJ Supreme Court

Republican New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie has nominated Bruce Harris, a gay African-American mayor, to the state's Supreme Court. The move was lauded by Log Cabin Republicans. Harris recently made history as the first African American, openly gay Republican elected mayor. When confirmed, Mayor Harris will be the first openly LGBT person in history, and the third African-American person in history, to serve on the NJ Supreme Court.

At press time, GAY USA, a NY-based weekly TV program, was reporting: NJ Republican Governor Chris Christie says he made a deal with the gay man, Bruce Harris, who he nominated to the state's high court to recuse himself on the same-sex marriage case. Christie wants to put gay marriage rights to a popular vote—and says that it is too bad Mississippi and Alabama could not have had state referenda on civil rights for African Americans in the 1960s.

Will LGBT Candidates Replace Congresswoman Gifford?

David Mixner.com reports that now that Congresswoman Gabby Gifford will not be able to face re-election due to her gunshot injuries. The Arizona governor will set a special election. The seat is considered marginal for Democrats. There are two LGBT Americans that might seek to win election to this seat. At one time openly gay Republican Jim Kolbe represented the same district before Giffords won.

One of the frontrunners for the seat would be Arizona State Representative Matt Heinz. The out Democrat is a Tuscson emergency room physican and has served in the Arizona State Assembly since 2008. Heinz is endorsed by the Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund in that race.

The other possible LGBT contender would be open lesbian State Senator Paula Aboud. She currently serves as Democratic Minority Whip in the Arizona State Senate. She was a teacher and moved to Maine to coach tennis and squash at Colby College. After several years there she returned to Tuscon and became involved in politics. She was appointed to Gabby Gifford's seat when Gifford went to Congress. She won it in her own right in the next election.

Fav Son Newt Gingrich: Fire Liberals

Perennial favorite political son and Republican presidential candidate Newt Gingrich has suggested that it would be a good idea to fire federal employees for being too liberal, share close, reported Ryan J. Reilly for TPM web site. Federal law says Gingrich's plan would be illegal.

"I think an intelligent conservative wants the right federal employees delivering the right services in a highly efficient way and then wants to get rid of those folks who are in fact wasteful, or those folks who are ideologically so far to the left, or those people who want to frankly dictate to the rest of us," Gingrich said in response to a question from a federal employee at a forum.

Reilly cites a report by the Justice Department's internal investigators found that George W. Bush administration officials discriminated against liberal employees in the Civil Rights Division and hired lawyers based on their conservative ideology.

Politics IS Personal

Central Voice is sad to report Granite Bay Wisconsin's 18-year-old Jeffrey Fehr hanged himself. At a reception following his funeral, many spoke of a gifted young athlete who was funny, kind and compassionate. They called Fehr an inspiration and a mentor. "So many people gained strength from Jeff," his father said, looking out at the crowd. "The unfortunate part is that Jeff didn't realize it."

"We will second-guess ourselves forever," his father said. "But we do know that for years and years, people knocked him down for being different. It damaged him. It wore on him. He could never fully believe how wonderful he was, and how many people loved him." Despite an increase in positive images of gay people in the mass media, from contestants in reality programs like "Project Runway" to sitcoms like "Modern Family," bullying of gay youths remains rampant. Nine out of 10 gay and bisexual students report harassment at school, according to the Trevor Project, a crisis intervention group. Gay and bisexual youths are four times more likely than their heterosexual peers to try suicide.

Indiana OKs LGBT Youth License Plates

The second state in the nation to do so, Indiana now allows gay-specific license plates. The plates feature the logo of Indiana Youth Group, hoping to tolerance. Cost

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Save the Date

Howard Dean:

"The Politics of Health: Healthcare Reform and How to Assure Quality Healthcare in the United States"

Oct. 4, 2012 in the midst of the presidential campaign, Governor Howard Dean, will be joining Alder Health Services to discuss the intersection of politics and health in America and how we can achieve a quality healthcare system for all in the United States.

All donors supporting Alder Health Services with an annual gift of $200 or more (from July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012) will receive a special invitation for you and a guest to attend a VIP reception and premium seating for his lecture that evening at The Whitaker Center and is limited to 125 participants. General admission tickets to the lecture will go on sale in the fall.

Alder Health Services serves individuals living with HIV/AIDS, the LGBT community and those struggling with addiction. Contact Courtney Lewis, director of development; Courtney@AlderHealth.org or 1.800.867.1550 for more information or to make a contribution.

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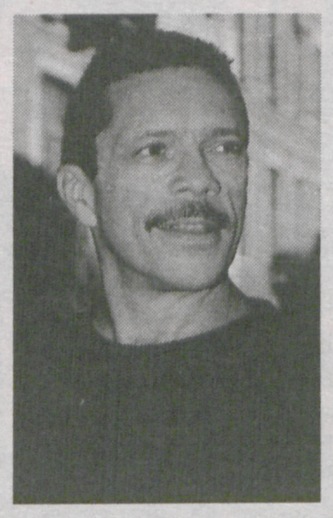


Frank Pizzoli

Since When Is Civility Noteworthy?

I loathe writing about myself. This endeavor is not about me. But after reading that Pennsylvania's Democratic U.S. Sen. Bob Casey Jr. and Republican U.S. Sen. Pat Toomey figured out how to cross party lines and work together, I thought how nice.

Since when did acting like adults become noteworthy? That rates a news release?

It's not a high expectation (or is it?) that those we elect to public office would know how to act. Even when they disagree.

If it's a goal of our Senators to set an example, then good work.

I'm imaging that Casey learned that skill from his mild mannered father, a political protégé of my father. I'm hoping I've learned, and practiced, some of what my Dad had in mind. Like when I was a teenager and we were in the car on our way to visit with Paul G. Ruane (July 31, 1933 – August 23, 2000), who was a former Republican member of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. He had something we wanted – his ear and his civility. And a favor or deal or legislative maneuver that would create good for some segment of the community.

In teenage, linear-thinking fashion I asked why we were going to see a Republican if our family and clan had been solidly Democratic for generations? My Dad served as an elected delegate to the 1948 Democratic National Convention held in Atlantic City when that body nominated Harry Truman for President. Unable to serve in the military due to his health, he served with the Office of the Price Administration during World War II.

He held other elected positions too.

He enjoyed telling me about that historic presidential nominating convention – when Strom Thurmond walked out to form the Boll Weevils, a group of conservative Southern Democrats not in agreement, among other issues, with desegregating the US Armed forces. He ran a third-party presidential campaign.

Before that historic year, during and after the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt, those same conservative southern Democrats were part of the coalition generally in support of Roosevelt's New Deal and Harry Truman's Fair Deal economic policies. They knew how to make things work without shutting down the government because one bully on the playground didn't get every single thing he wanted and instead went home.

Back in that historic year of 1948, they didn't go home although did travel a bit further. They attempted civility. "Some guys were really upset. We had to offer our guests, the far away travelers, the better rooms. So we were far away from the convention center each night. It's what you do…" Dad explained. Doesn't sound like it's what we do much anymore.

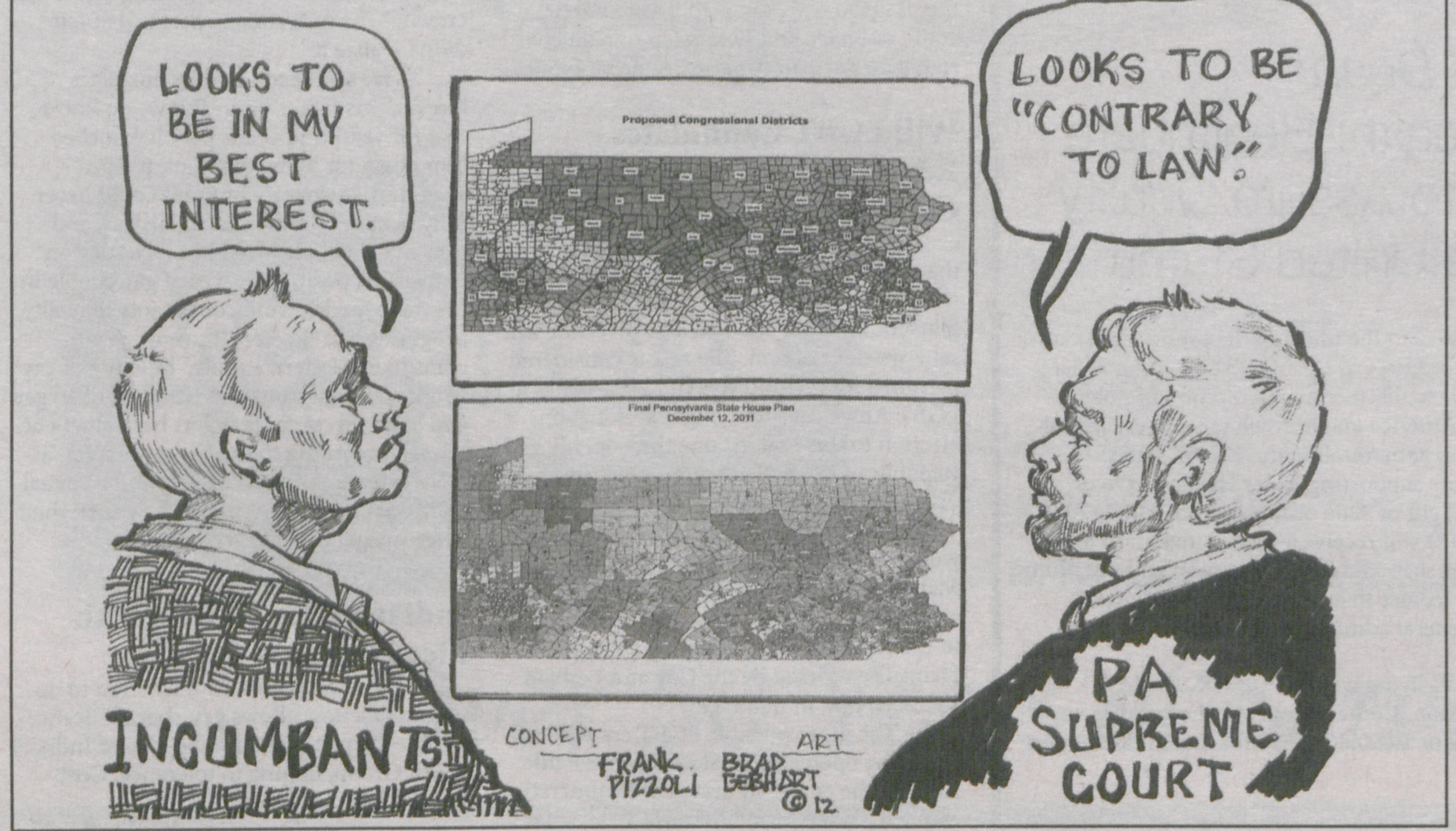
voice box

FEY HISTORY

I'm not much of an American history buff, but what I did read lead me to believe that James Buchannan was gay. Some people say he may have been gay. Many think he was not a good president, maybe even our worst. Then there's Abraham Lincoln. Some say he was gay and that he was our best president. I guess we're like everyone else, good, bad, nothing special about being gay. Anyway, job well done with the issue.

A Reader

E-mail your thoughts to Central VOICE posops@aol.com



Bill Saves Taxpayers Money, Cuts Pollution, Says Green Group

Citizens for Pennsylvania's Future, also known as Penn Future, recently commended the Pennsylvania State House for passage by 170 - 18 of House Bill 193, sponsored by Rep. Kate Harper, R- Montgomery.

The measure provides, the group says, clear high-performance building standards for most construction projects involving buildings owned or substantially leased by the Commonwealth.

"This smart legislation is major win for taxpayers, the environment, and the economy," said Jan Jarrett, Penn Future.

"Building our government facilities to these standards will save taxpayers money by cutting energy costs drastically; it will protect our families and businesses from harmful air pollution; and it will make our public workers more productive. This is a terrific move forward for everyone.

PennFUTURE
Every environmental victory grows the economy.

Buildings account for approximately 40 percent of

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the gerrymandered voice *By Alan Kennedy-Shaffer*

Harrisburg HOPE

Alan Kennedy-Shaffer
Central Voice photo

"There is hardly a political question in the United States which doesn't sooner or later turn into a judicial one," Alexis De Tocqueville wrote in Democracy in America in 1835. One hundred seventy-seven years later, De Tocqueville's observation could not be more apt. Pennsylvania Supreme Court Chief Justice Ronald Castille's decision to cross party lines and reject as "contrary to law" the gerrymandered state senate and state house maps was so unexpected that even Senate Majority Leader Dominic Pileggi admitted to being "surprised." At press time, the opinion had not been released. The ruling, however, is a refreshing admission by the Court that the reapportionment plan that the Patriot-News called an "amorphous modern art drawing" was a crime against democracy. Let's hope the surprise becomes a wake-up call to those in power.

Originally, the Republican leadership, with the support of Governor Tom Corbett and forty Democratic state representatives, planned to carve up Dauphin County into three congressional districts and three state senate districts, severing Harrisburg from the rest of the county and diluting the area's votes. The district represented by State Senator Jeffrey Piccola would have curved around Harrisburg in a broad horseshoe, a design that Cumberland and Perry County commissioners of both parties said was "lacking any common sense." As redrawn, Harrisburg City would have joined Lebanon County in the state senate and Adams and York counties in Congress. A sliver of the City would be represented by Congressman Lou Barletta of Hazleton, whose district would span over 100 miles from Cumberland County to Wyoming County. Such misrepresentation and vote dilution was out of line and deserved to be tossed by the Court.

In a very real sense, American democracy is measured by whether all Americans are provided representation in Congress and in state legislatures, which write our laws. Our voices are measured by our votes.

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Without representation, we will not be able to reform the process. Progressive legislation will not be written, much less enacted.

However, the judicial question of whether the new congressional and legislative maps are constitutional was not likely to get an impartial hearing in the state's top court. Justice Joan Orie Melvin, one of the three Republican members of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court who dissented in the decision by the Court not to accept the gerrymandered legislative maps, is currently under investigation by Allegheny District Attorney Stephen A. Zappala, Jr., regarding the improper use of state resources and staff in her 2009 judicial campaign. State Senator Jane Orie, an Allegheny County Republican, and another sister, Janine Orie, until recently an assistant to Justice Melvin, have already been indicted and face corruption and obstruction of justice charges related to an attempt to scapegoat Senator Orie's former chief of staff by introducing forged documents.

Advocates for nonpartisan judicial selection and impartial judicial application, including Pennsylvanians for Modern Courts, called for Justice Melvin to refrain from answering the critical questions surrounding the intensely partisan redistricting plans, given the questions surrounding Melvin's multi-million dollar election. They asked whether a judge whose election may have resulted from the misuse of state resources could be impartial in a case with profound implications regarding those same resources. Democracy Rising PA, Common Cause PA and other groups have also called for Pennsylvania to rethink the manner in which our state's congressional and legislative lines are drawn. Without transparency or term limits for those in power, the process has long been viewed as a playground for partisanship and power politics.

Consequently, the political question of how Pennsylvania's congressional and legislative lines should be drawn is also a judicial question, and the judicial question of whether such lines are constitutional is also a political one. Although the fourteenth amendment to the United States Constitution specifies that "representatives shall be apportioned among the several states according to their respective numbers, counting the whole number of persons in each state," and guarantees to all Americans, regardless of race, sex and tax bracket, due process and equal protection, the Constitution leaves ambiguous the manner in which such apportionment is to occur every ten years. Partisan vote dilution and incumbency protection have been the result. The appeal was pro forma. Nobody predicted that Justice Castille would have a change of heart.

What happens next will tell whether the Court's bipartisan rejection of an egregious political play will be a wake-up call or just another lost opportunity for reform. Although the ruling does not apply to the new congressional map, which promises to undermine Harrisburg's ability to elect a representative to Congress for the next ten years, the reapportionment commission should do right by Justice Castille's January surprise and take a new look at all of the proposed maps. Barring another dramatic move by the courts to curtail the usual efforts by incumbent legislators to choose their voters, rather than allowing voters to choose their legislators, millions of African Americans, Hispanic Americans, and gay men and lesbians (who account for a disproportionate share of urban and Democratic votes) will be effectively denied representation in Congress.

In a very real sense, American democracy is measured by whether all Americans are provided representation in Congress and in state legislatures, which write our laws. Our voices are measured by our votes. Efforts to deny representation in Congress and the legislature to the Harrisburg area reflect the myopic and parochial interests of incumbents in office too long and the systemic denial of representation to those who do not control the process. Without representation, we will not be able to reform the process. Progressive legislation will not be written, much less enacted. If our voices are to be heard, we must demand that those who seek our votes commit to a transparent reapportionment process, term limits for incumbents, campaign finance reforms and an impartial judiciary. Our democracy depends upon it.

HARRISBURG HOPE

Community Starts Here -You Ask the Questions

Harrisburg Hope PA House Candidates Forum
Thursday, March 1 @ 6 p.m. / Midtown Scholar Bookstore
All 103rd district candidates invited.

Harrisburg Hope PA Senate Candidates Forum
Thursday, March 8 @ 6 p.m. / Midtown Scholar Bookstore
All 15th district candidates invited.

Harrisburg Hope Recovery Plan Community Forum
Thursday, March 15 @ 6 p.m. / Midtown Scholar Bookstore
Invited panelists: Receiver, Mayor, Council President.

Bill Saves Taxpayers Money continued from page 4

energy use, 72 percent of electricity consumption, and 13 percent of water use. Studies show that the high-performance buildings in House Bill 193 would lead to substantial savings in operating costs over the life of the buildings, saving taxpayers money on energy and water bills.

Jan Jarrett

These savings come from more efficient lighting, greater use of natural light, more efficient heating and cooling systems, better insulated walls and roofs, more efficient use of water, the use of systems that generate less wastewater, and the need to construct less water and wastewater infrastructure and capacity.

"This smart legislation is a major win for taxpayers, the environment, and the economy" ***Jan Jarrett***

High-performance buildings cause less pollution, generate less solid waste, and contribute to a healthier, more productive work environment for their occupants.

House Bill 193 enables Pennsylvania state government, including the State System of Higher Education, the group says, to model leadership by smartly promoting the use of green buildings, using (and reusing) Pennsylvania products and building materials.

A variety of green building rating systems would be acceptable under the bill.

letters to the editor

Superb

Thanks for your superb profile of me and Harrisburg Hope. Everyone loves it, especially my mom!

Alan Kennedy-Shaffer
Founder, Harrisburg Hope

Green Groups Respond En Masse to Drilling Law

As a group, Clean Water Action, Conservation Voters of Pennsylvania, Delaware Riverkeeper Network, Earthworks, PennEnvironment, and Sierra Club, PA Chapter responded en masse to the state General Assembly passing House Bill 1950 which calls for "impact fees" regarding the state's Marcellus Shale drilling.

Feb. 7 the Pennsylvania Senate and House voted in favor of HB1950, a compromise gas development bill that was hammered out behind closed doors under the heavy hand of Governor Tom Corbett. Under the guise of providing "impact fees" to municipalities where gas operations occur, the legislature effectively supported a takeover of municipalities by the State and the gas industry by gutting established and effective local planning and zoning rights.

Through provisions contained in the bill, municipalities will no longer be able to play a central, critical role in protecting the health, safety, and welfare of residents and determining which uses of land are most beneficial.

The bill requires that all types of oil and gas operations (except for natural gas processing plants)—unlike any other commercial or industrial business—be allowed in all zoning districts, even in residential neighborhoods and near schools, parks, hospitals, and sensitive natural and cultural resource protection areas. As a result, people could be forced to live only 300 feet away from a gas well, open frack waste pit, or pipeline, despite growing evidence that such development causes pollution, damages health, and lowers property values.

The bill also mandates a one-size-fits-all ordinance that supersedes all existing ordinances and prevents municipalities from adopting any zoning provisions that are stricter than the weak, mandated standards.

"The PA Legislature has let the gas industry take over, despite the terrible consequences that drilling is having in communities across the Commonwealth. This so-called impact fee bill brings no net fiscal gain to Pennsylvania residents; it robs us of the ability to protect what is most locally valuable—our health, safety, and resources—and gives gas operators the right to run all over our communities. This is unjust and exposes the true allegiances of the Bill's supporters—self-interested gas developers and their backers," said Maya van Rossum, the Delaware Riverkeeper.

"Many legislators and Governor Corbett told Pennsylvania residents that protecting their health and rights matters far less to them than the gas industry's demands," said Nadia Steinzor, Marcellus Regional Organizer for Earthworks' Oil and Gas Accountability Project. "They and other supporters of this bill turned a blind eye on the widespread damage caused by drilling and a deaf ear to calls from citizens for change, while doing the bidding of companies that want to drill anywhere, anytime."

"If legislators were looking to pass a proposal that will allow more gas drilling near people's homes, and the parks, playgrounds and schools where our children play and spend their days, then 'Mission Accomplished,'" said Erika Staaf of PennEnvironment. "Sadly, this is just one more case of powerful interests dominating the political process, and the lack of leadership on both sides of the aisle to do anything about it."

"A poorly-regulated gas industry will be able to drill in residential neighborhoods, bringing thousands of gallons of toxic chemicals, thousands of tractor trailers, round the clock noisy, polluting drilling, all as little as a football field away from homes, day care centers, and playgrounds," said Jeff Schmidt, Director of Sierra Club's Pennsylvania Chapter. "The legislators who voted in favor of HB 1950 have abandoned any pretense that they are acting in the public interest. We will make sure the public knows who sided with the drillers and who sided with citizens when they go to the polls for this year's elections."

"This bill represents a huge step backwards in protection for Pennsylvania towns and the environment," said Myron Arnowitt, PA State Director for Clean Water Action. "The state override of local zoning ordinances will greatly increase the threats to communities from all aspects of gas extraction. Never before has one industry been given full rights to do as they please, without recognizing the needs of other businesses, residents, and our environment. 2012 is an election year, and we will be devoting our energy to ensuring that the voters of Pennsylvania are aware of which legislators voted to give away our control over an industry that has contaminated our air, land, and water."

"The legislators who voted for HB 1950 made a short-sighted decision that puts the health and safety of Pennsylvania's communities at risk," said Josh McNeil, Executive Director of Conservation Voters of Pennsylvania. "They voted against the interests of their constituents and should expect those constituents to return the favor in the November election."

One Man's Loophole Is Another Man's Noose?

Submitted by State Representatives Eugene DePasquale, and Dave Reed

House Bill 2150 would lower the nation's largest business tax rate says State Rep. Eugene DePasquale, D-York, and State Rep. Dave Reed, R-Indiana. They want to close the "Delaware Loophole" and implement necessary business tax reforms in Pennsylvania. The term was coined to describe a legal tax planning practice of multi-state corporations to reduce their Pennsylvania tax liabilities by transferring the ownership of intangible assets to an affiliated company in Delaware.

"We realize the number one issue for Pennsylvanians is jobs, and we believe that closing this loophole will stimulate our economy and get more Pennsylvanians back to work," DePasquale said. "In the long run, this bill will make our Commonwealth a more viable competitor in the jobs market, bringing more companies to Pennsylvania to do business."

DePasquale said the proposal, H.B. 2150, would only affect businesses that are taking advantage of the loophole for the sole purpose of tax avoidance in Pennsylvania. It would dedicate the revenue captured to reduce Pennsylvania's overall business tax burden.

"This bill would employ something known as an 'expense addback' provision to close the loophole and level the playing field for Pennsylvania companies, improving our economy and creating more jobs for Pennsylvanians.

"Closing the Delaware Loophole will enable us to gradually reduce the corporate net income tax, implement a single sales apportionment factor and phase out the cap on net operating losses," DePasquale said. "This will bring consistency to our business tax structure and make Pennsylvania a great place to do business."

DePasquale said the Delaware Loophole has garnered significant attention over the years and has been criticized as a flaw in Pennsylvania's business tax structure. The term was coined to describe a legal tax planning practice of multi-state corporations to reduce their Pennsylvania tax liabilities by transferring the ownership of intangible assets to an affiliated company in Delaware.

DePasquale and Reed are joined by members of both parties in introducing the legislation. To date, H.B. 2150 has more than 50 cosponsors.

Energy Savings Law a Success

Submitted by Penn Future

The PennFuture Energy Center for Enterprise and the Environment has released a new study by Optimal Energy detailing the impact of Act 129, the energy savings law, on Pennsylvania's families and businesses, environment, and economy.

"The energy savings law is an unqualified success," said Courtney Lane, senior energy policy analyst for PennFuture. "Thanks to Act 129, Pennsylvanians have succeeded in cutting demand for electricity by 2,073 gigawatt-hours (GWh) – 41 percent greater than required by the law; racked up savings of $278 million annually for our families and businesses; and gained 4,000 job years ((job years are measured as one full-time job for one year). We have also reduced air pollution that leads to global warming significantly, cutting 23 million tons of carbon dioxide over the lifetime of the installed energy efficiency measures, the same as taking four million cars off the road for a year. And the cherry on the top is that our electricity grid is becoming more stable, along with electricity prices, every year this program is in force.

"And these successes come at a very low cost," continued Lane. "For every dollar spent on Act 129 programs, customers receive $8 in energy savings over the life of the measures. The energy savings law has truly been a triple win: for our citizens, our economy, and our environment. Now, we need to stay on that winning path.

The utility energy savings law, Act 129, became law on October 15, 2008 with the promise of curtailing energy demand, creating jobs, and reducing pollution. The Act was to achieve these goals by requiring Pennsylvania electric utilities to reduce their overall electricity load by 1 percent by May 31, 2011 and 3 percent by May 31, 2013, and to reduce peak demand by 4.5 percent by offering electric customers a portfolio of cost-effective energy efficiency and conservation programs. Optimal's analysis of the Act 129 data through May 31, 2011 shows that every utility exceeded its first Act 129 goal of a 1 percent reduction in electricity consumption with the exception of West Penn Power.

The current Act 129 program expires on May 31, 2013. The Public Utility Commission (PUC) has until November 30, 2013 to determine if it has been cost-effective; if so, it is required to set new savings goals.

However, if the PUC does not take action well in advance of the November 2013 date, there will be a "blackout" period for utility energy efficiency programs. This will mean several months of inaction be-

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Truth Wins Out: Ex-gay Leader Disavows His Movement

John Smid, the former Executive Director of Exodus International's oldest ministry "Love in Action," has publicly admitted that he is gay, and now says that being LGBTQ is an intrinsic part of a person's being, not a "behavior" that one can repent from, according to LGBTNation.com.

Writing on the website of his new ministry, Grace Rivers, Smid said, "One cannot repent of something that is unchangeable."

Smid, who resigned as Executive Director of Love in Action in 2008 — an ex-gay Christian ministry that purports to "restore those trapped" in homosexuality — is now disavowing the message he preached for years that promised gays they could change.

In acknowledging that he is gay, Smid wrote: "I also want to reiterate here that the transformation for the vast majority of homosexuals will not include a change of sexual orientation. Actually I've never met a man who experienced a change from homosexual to heterosexual."

"I used to define homosexuality or heterosexuality in terms describing one's behavior. I thought it made sense and through the years often wrote articles and talked from that perspective.

"Today, I understand why the gay community had such an issue with my writings. My perspective denied so many facets of the homosexual experience. I minimized a person's life to just their sexuality but homosexuality is much more than sex."

Smid also writes that, "I am homosexual, my wife is heterosexual," and that this creates a "unique marriage experience that many do not understand."

"For many years I tried to fit into the box of heterosexuality. I tried my hardest to create heterosexuality in my life but this also created a lot of shame, a sense of failure, and discouragement. Nothing I did seemed to change me into a heterosexual even though I was in a marriage that included heterosexual behavior.

"Today, I understand why the gay community had such an issue with my writings. My perspective denied so many facets

John Smid

of the homosexual experience. I minimized a person's life to just their sexuality but homosexuality is much more than sex."

Smid concludes by saying that honestly accepting your sexual orientation can open the door to a faith and life that makes sense.

"Far too many homosexuals who are seeking Christ perceive that they cannot come close to Him if they remain a homosexual. In this mindset they search feverishly for change that will not come to them," he wrote.

Political Update continued from page 3

is 40 more than traditional license plates in the state, $25 of which will be donated to the group, according to the Chicago Phoenix. Indiana Youth Group has been attempting to get the plate approved since 2010, when the state the request was denied twice with the state's ACLU branch stepping in to file suit. Though the lawsuit has since been dismissed, a third request for approvaql of the plates was granted and it is now available along with other organizational plates such as D.A.R.E. and Habitat for Humanity.

IRS Asks Couples to Lie?

"Under penalties of perjury, I declare that I have examined this return and accompanying schedules and statements, and to the best of my knowledge and belief, they are true and complete." IRS Form 1040

Each year the federal government demands that thousands of gay married couples lie by requesting that their tax returns be filed as "single" individuals. "The federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) not only denies legally married gay couples the benefits of marriage, but we are also told to disavow our spouses and file our taxes as "single," says refusetolie.org.

The site reports that nationwide, legally married gay couples are taking a stand by refusing to lie about the fact that they are married. PLEASE NOTE: Taking this principled stand, the site says, is not without risk and each person doing so needs to carefully consider those risks before deciding if he or she is willing to take a stand.

Microsoft & Google Challenge Marriage Act

Joining 70 other companies, Microsoft and Google have filed a friend-of-the-court brief opposing the federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). The suit claims barring gay marriages is bad for business and forces companies to discriminate.

Microsoft and the other companies complain that the DOMA - which defines marriage as between a man and woman - forces the companies to discriminate against employees by treating them differently on issues ranging from retirement to health care to recruiting.

DOMA also adds to company costs as they attempt to come up with "workarounds" to compensate a worker for the "discriminatory effects of DOMA," according to the brief.

Lancaster events

2012 Gun Show Dates
March 3 & 4 and Sept. 15 & 16
LANCASTER COUNTY CONVENTION CENTER
25 S. Queen Street
Lancaster, PA 17603
Admission $8.00
Saturday: 9 AM to 5 PM
Sunday: 9 AM to 4 PM
Children under 12 admitted free with parent. Persons between 12 and 18 admitted with parent or guardian; admission $8.

LAUNCH Music Conference & Festival 2012
April 26-29
The LAUNCH Music Conference remains one of the premiere places for artists to network with peers and music industry professionals all while enjoying a fun, exciting, music-filled weekend in historic Downtown Lancaster, PA! http://www.launchmusicconference.com

Energy

continued from page 6

tween the time utilities are required to meet their 2013 goals (May 31, 2013) and when the PUC makes a determination on future goals (November 30, 2013), and approves those new utility plans. The Optimal report includes estimates of future savings and other benefits of extending the program.

"The facts are clear," said Lane. "Act 129 works for everyone, and the PUC should take action to extend the programs and keep Pennsylvanians moving forward with new jobs, less money wasted, and cleaner air."

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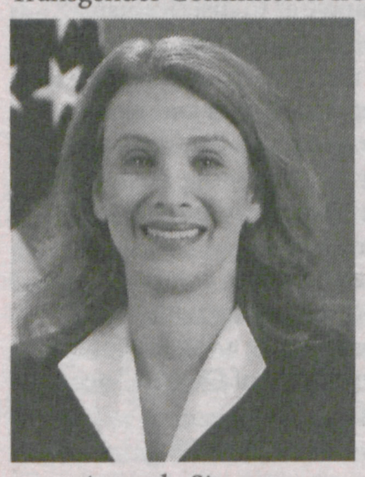
transgender column

By Jeanine Ruhsam
president of TransCentralPA

Amanda Simpson to Speak at Keystone Conference

Late last night (Feb. 8) I received word that the White House and the DOD have given Amanda Simpson official permission to be the keynote speaker at the Gala Dinner on Saturday evening, March 31 at the Keystone Conference 2012. Amanda made international news a couple of years ago when she accepted an appointment by the Obama Administration to the Department of Commerce- the first openly transgender woman appointee in any administration.

Amanda is much more that that, though. She is a former test pilot for Raytheon who helped persuade the company to adopt a policy protecting employees from discrimination and abuse based on gender identity; she has served on the boards of numerous organizations, including the Arizona Human Rights Fund, the Tucson Corporate LGBT Coalition, Out and Equal Workplace Advocates and the National Center for Transgender Equality. Amanda also served as a commissioner on the City of Tucson Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Commission from 2001 until 2008. She was a candidate for Representative in the Arizona House in 2004, where she won the Democratic primary but was unsuccessful in the general election. She was elected as an Arizona Delegate for Hillary Clinton to the 2008 Democratic National Convention. In July 2011, Simpson was reposted to the United States Department of Defense where she serves today. We at TransCentralPA & the Keystone Conference are honored to have such an accomplished person as our guest speaker and standard bearer.



Amanda Simpson

This will be the gender conference's "Keystone Conference: A Celebration of Gender Diversity" fourth annual event and it will take place at the Sheraton Harrisburg-Hershey Hotel on March 28 through 31. We began the event with a realistic vision, and high hopes…and we've seen our hopes surpassed, in the increasing numbers of attendees, in the quality of the workshops and presenters, in the supportive programs and in the social functions. Last year we were the second-largest attended gender conference in the United States, and also the most affordable. The "buzz" about Keystone and Harrisburg grows, and we continue our efforts to keep the energy and positive momentum moving forward.

As we did last year, we are partnering with the LGBT Community Center of Central PA and other local LGBT organizations to stage a charity auction Friday evening called the "Date of Your Dreams", the benefactor of which is the Butterfly Ball, a prom affair for LGBT youth held at the hotel on Friday evening. This year's Butterfly Ball is going to be quite a large and festive occasion, and with the support of the community and sponsors of Keystone, our youth's special night will be subsidized so they may attend the sit down dinner dance for a ticket cost of only $10.00.

The conference kicks off on Wednesday, March 28 with programs and social activities oriented specifically for transgender identifying people. A series of educational and informative seminars which will be of interest to a broad range of people that identify, work with or support the LGBT community begins on Thursday March 29 and extends through Friday and Saturday March 30 and 31. This year sixteen of the workshops have been qualified for Continuing Education Credits (for therapists, counselors, and social workers) though our partnership with Bryn Mawr College Graduate School of Social Work & Social research. Please check our website for more information.

We'll have nationally renowned keynote speakers for the three luncheons during the seminar days, including international trans advocate Jamison Green, author of The Visible Man, president of WPATH (World Professional Association for Transgender Health) and one of only eight people in the world with a PhD in Law with a focus on transsexual and transgender issues. Jamison will speak at Saturday's lunch, and will also be guest of honor at a trans man dinner Friday night.

Now, about the social side of this event! Come with an appetite and wear your dancing shoes Saturday night: following a cocktail reception outside the Commonwealth ballroom and our elegant dinner within, we'll be having a dance till the wee hours. Should you want more, the trans-social events actually begin Wednesday at Suba/Mangia Qui with our own guest bartender, music and dining; Thursday evening we board coaches to travel up for dinner and fun at the Hollywood Casino, and Friday night we again coach down to dine on Harrisburg's Restaurant Row at five participating restaurants, followed by clubbing at our local "family" night spots and nationally known artist Namoli Brennet entertaining in the lunge at our host hotel.. A shuttle bus is provided on all nights for registered event attendees.

This is an event for all that have an interest in or connection with the transgender community- which, I hope, includes many of you that are readers of this journal and are members of the LGBT community of Pennsylvania and our surrounding area. It's a great opportunity to mingle with us and get to know what and who we are. Please come, please participate, and please help support the growth and acceptance of your trans family.

Jeanine Ruhsam is president, TransCentralPA (www.transcentralpa.org) and Co-chair, Keystone Conference (www.keystone-conference.org)

Lehigh Valley Political Leaders Roast Equality Pa.'s Adrian Shanker

Adrian Shanker

Equality Pennsylvania's president, Adrian Shanker, turns 25 in April, and a birthday roast has been planned in his honor. Lehigh Valley political leaders will roast Shanker, an Allentown resident, at a brunch fundraiser at 11 a.m. April 1 at The Palace Center in Allentown.

Shanker was elected President of Equality Pennsylvania in September 2011 and previously served as Vice President of Pennsylvania Diversity Network, the Lehigh Valley's regional LGBT advocacy organization.

He has led successful campaigns to expand equality for the LGBT community in the cities of Allentown and Easton with Domestic Partner Benefits for City workers, in Bethlehem with a non-discrimination law, and in the Bangor and Northampton School Districts by fighting back illegal attempts to limit the rights of LGBT students. The Philadelphia Gay News named him and EQPA Executive Director, Ted Martin, People of the Year in January 2012.

The roast features Bethlehem-based professional comedian, Ryan Hill, as roast master and a slate of political leaders including Bethlehem Mayor John Callahan, Allentown Mayor Ed Pawlowski, Easton City Councilperson Mike Fleck, and Lehigh County Democratic Party Chairperson Bar Johnston.

The April event will be complimented by a musical performance by Karikatura, a Brooklyn-based band combining the flavors of the world's music with the art of storytelling. Karikatura weaves together sounds from Gypsie, Latin and Reggae traditions to forge a sound that is their own. The band has recently returned from their third international tour this year, and are preparing for the US release of their brand new EP, Departures, in March.

In addition to the roast and concert, the event includes a cash bar, raffle, and silent auction, including locally made artwork, tickets to Lehigh Valley's entertainment venues, and more.

Tickets are available for $30 per person.

For more information, to contribute an item to the silent auction or to purchase tickets, email Aeshanker@gmail.com.

Santorum Not the Worst?

Former Republican US Senator from Pa. Rick Santorum may not have been the most anti-gay candidate that ran in January's New Hampshire presidential primary.

Could it have been a Democrat?

The "Democrat" is Randall Terry, the notorious right-wing founder of the anti-abortion group Operation Rescue. Terry was one of 44 candidates that ran. Most of the 44 are barely known private citizens who were willing to pay a $1,000 fee to get their names on the ballot. There are 30 running for the Republican nomination and 14 for the Democratic nomination.

While on the elusive campaign trail, one panelist asked Terry if he believes in state's rights and, related to that, whether he believes states' rights should control on the issue of same-sex marriage.

Terry's response:

"The founders gave us the 10th Amendment to keep the federal government from micro-managing the vast majority of details that would affect us as a country. However, they could never have conceived of a moment in which we would become so debauched that we would elevate homosexual marriage or civil unions to the level of marriage, which has been with us since the dawn of time. Take it out of this debate and put it into child killing by abortion or slavery. Did the states have a right to have laws that protected slaveholders? The answer is no. There are

some things that are fundamentally evil, like slavery. And there is no state right to own another human being, there is no state right to kill your offspring, and there is no state right to have homosexual marriage."

He was subjected to a heavy glitter-attack from another of the Democratic candidates –Vermin Supreme, who easily won as the primary's most colorful candidate. Supreme, Vermin Supreme is his legally adopted name, is fairly well known and welcomed as a perennial presidential candidate-performance activist in New Hampshire. He dresses in colorful attire that includes a gigantic boot on his head and promises to give every American a pony and to promote good dental hygiene.

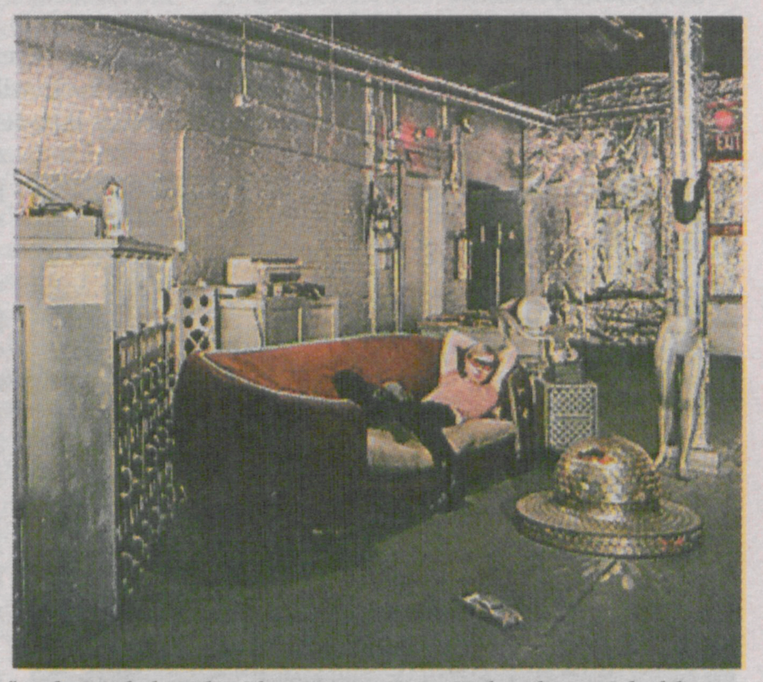
After taking a question at the December 19 forum, Supreme announced that "Jesus told me to make Randall Terry gay" and he doused Terry, who was sitting next to him on stage, with a heavy dose of glitter.

Central Voice "Warholized"

Feb. 22, 1987 Andy Warhol died. Da Vinci Art Alliance, Philadelphia's oldest artist association paid tribute last month on the 25th anniversary of his death with a multi-media exhibition by 36 member artists, a memorial catalogue, and a panel discussion exploring the impact and influence of Andy Warhol. Fleisher Art Memorial also participated in the event partially sponsored by a grant from Campbell's Soup Company, and a donation from Matt and Brenda Lyons.

"Warholized: 15 Minutes and 25 Years," a panel discussion filled the facility to capacity with an appearance by artists James and Madalen Warhola (Andy's nephew and niece), and moderated by Art Historian and noted Warhol scholar Dr. Debra Miller.

Jon Naar, photographer and author of "Getting the Picture." Naar is best known for having taken the 1967 photograph Andy Warhol describes as the "best" photo of himself shown here. *Central Voice photo*



"Andy Warhol in the Silver Factory, New York, photographed by Jon Naar 1967. Copyright Jon Naar 1967, 2012"

From left: James Warhola, Madalen Warhola, Ray Costello, and Debra Miller. *Central Voice photo*

Da Vinci Art Alliance is a non-profit artists' organization located in South Philadelphia. The organization was founded in 1931 to serve the needs of professional artists and artisans in the Delaware Valley. Da Vinci currently has over 150 members and is supported through membership dues, gallery rentals, sales commissions, grants, and donations. It holds exhibitions of members' and non-members' artwork as well as special events, workshops, performances, poetry readings, and lectures, and publishes a quarterly newsletter for its members.

Debra Miller holds a Ph.D. in Art History, with specializations in Renaissance, Baroque, and American Art. She currently teaches at Rowan University, Glassboro, NJ, and at Hussian School of Art, Philadelphia, where she serves as Chair of the General Education Department. She was named a Commonwealth Speaker for the Pennsylvania Humanities Council for 2008-09 and 2010-11, lecturing throughout the state on Andy Warhol. Dr. Miller serves as President of the Board of Directors of Da Vinci Art. She has received grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Kress Foundation, and the American Philosophical Society, among others, including funding for two years of doctoral research in Amsterdam, and two years of post-doctoral research in Venice. Her many publications include the fully illustrated catalogue Artists of the Warhol Circle Then and Now (an exhibition she curated, which traveled the world for seven years), the first monograph on Factory photographer Billy Name (Billy Name: Stills from the Warhol Films), and contributions to Gerard Malanga, Screen

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1st Place Award - Artist Peter Seidel was awarded the exhibit's 1st Place Award as selected by James and Madalen Warhola. *Central Voice photo*

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6th Annual Black and White Party Headlines America's Got Talent's Prince Poppycock

This year's headline entertainer for the 6th Annual Black and White Party is Prince Poppycock, an American singer, songwriter, and performer who came to national attention when he competed on America's Got Talent.

Prince Poppycock will meet and great all VIP guests and sponsors after his performance. The event is May 5, 6 p.m. and is held at the Zembo Center, Harrisburg, Pa.

"We had to start ticket sales early we've had so much demand for information on this event," says Charles King, lead organizer which benefits individuals in the region living with HIV/AIDS. To date, the all-volunteer fundraiser has raised $90,000.

Media Sensation

Poppycock "is my mask," the popular entertainer says in People Magazine. "Give a man a mask and he will tell you the truth, in the style of Commedia dell'arte."

The New York Post noted Poppycock embodies the sensibility of "humor, irony and sarcasm". He wears elaborate costuming and "dresses as if he stepped out of a French Baroque painting (pantaloons, powdered wig and pasty makeup)."

The New York Post also called him "a towering, powder-faced concoction of glam-rock, synth-pop and light opera wrapped up in flamboyant period costumes." His face is matted with whiteface (or white clown) a symbol of the highest status in the clown hierarchy and the oldest of modern clown archetypes.

This year's evening also includes: Silent and Live

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Call 717-439-6482 for ticket information. Tickets for the April 29 performance at the Hershey Theatre can be purchased at the Hershey Theatre Box Office or thru Ticketmaster.

4-Artist Exhibition Runs 'til March 29

Abstract paintings, photographs, and mirrors are view at The Art Association of Harrisburg, 21 North Front Street, through March 29. The four exhibitors are Susan Courtney, Hanover; Tom Svec, Lock Haven; Jeffrey Tritt, Philadelphia, and Gordon Wenzel, Danville.

Susan Courtney terms her photography "Visual Interpretations of Energy in Art," capturing the abstract movement of energy through her unique perspective. She says that the material illusion fades away, allowing the viewer to perceive unlimited vision and expanded awareness. She has exhibited throughout the Harrisburg region.

Tom Svec, furniture designer, has been intrigued with mirrors for several years. As a designer and builder of furniture, he had included mirrors in his portfolio, but always as accessories and not the main event. In his definition of mirrors, he says that he's moved from the reflective surface being the primary material to a focus on wood and other materials so that the finished pieces are less about personal reflection, and more about "the visual integration of the surrounding interrelated design areas." His studio/workshop has been in operation for over thirty years near Lock Haven, PA. He is looking forward to exhibiting in the AAH galleries, which "offer a sumptuous interior, rich in wood tones, spatial elegance, diffuse light, and period accoutrements." His pieces are meant to be "visually playful, and complimentary to the artwork with which they are displayed."

Jeffrey Tritt, a graduate of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, also studied at the Barnes Foundation and the former York Academy of Art. His media include oils, watercolours, and gouache, as well as stained glass. His brilliant colours and abstract figurative text are drawn from his imagination. Tritt's work often starts with shapes, letters and random figures, which he then whittles, reconfigures and orchestrates with his medium, shaping it into a body of work.

Gordon Wenzel, who holds a Master of Photography degree from the Professional Photographers of America, is owner of Impressions Photography Studio + Gallery in Danville, specializing in commercial and fashion photography. His photography has been exhibited at Susquehanna University, Penn State University, and Toronto's Gallery Arcturus. The collection he will show at AAH is titled "globanomics," which explores the importance of managing global resources and the interconnection of the cycles of decay and renewal. He states that "what is most intriguing is the impact of nature on human progress. Our modern world often confronts its plundering of the natural world, but these images also explore the inverse…nature's impact on human progress."

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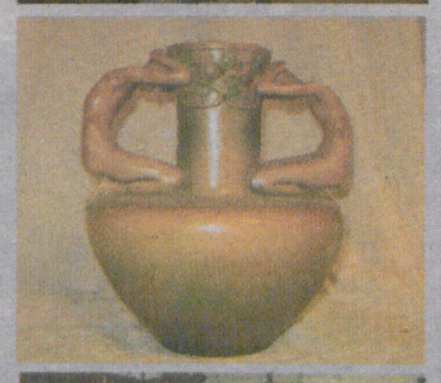

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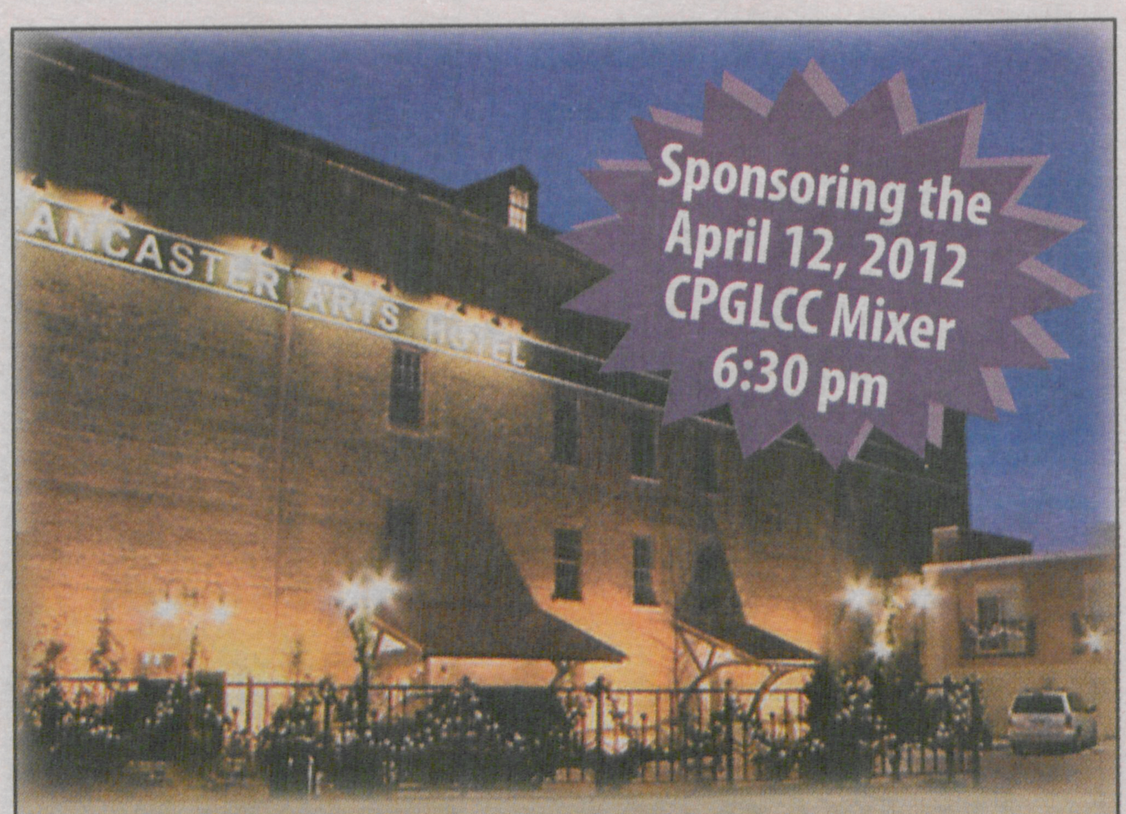

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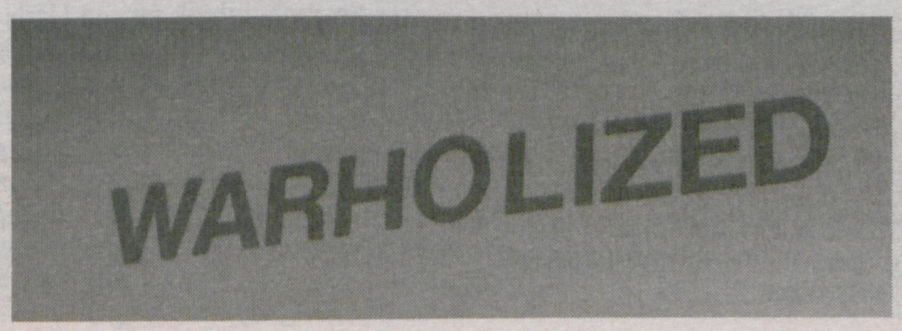
Warholized continued from page 9

Tests Portraits Nudes 1964-1996. Along with her work in Art History and the Fine Arts, Dr. Miller serves as a voter for the Barrymore Awards for Excellence in Theatre, for the Theatre Alliance of Greater Philadelphia. She is a staff writer for "http://www.stagepartners.org/" www.STAGEpartners.org (based in Wilmington, DE), a contributing writer for "http://www.theartblog.org" www.theartblog.org (Philadelphia), and the Philadelphia Arts and Culture Correspondent for Central Voice (Harrisburg, PA).

Ultra Violet was born Isabelle Collin Dufresne in La Tronche, Isère, France. She received a BA in Art from Le Sacre Coeur in Grenoble, before becoming a pupil, studio assistant, and muse of Salvador Dalí, in Port Lligat, Spain, and New York City. In the 1960s, Ultra associated with many New York artists, including Robert Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns, James Rosenquist, John Chamberlain, Roy Lichtenstein, and George Segal, as well as many internationally renowned masters like Marcel Duchamp, René Magritte, Marc Chagall, Pablo Picasso, John Graham, and Joseph Cornell. Most notably, she worked on several Andy Warhol film projects while collaborating with him at The Factory and becoming an original Superstar.Ultra is the author of the international bestselling memoir, Famous for Fifteen Minutes: My Years with Andy Warhol, which has been published in seventeen languages. Famous, an opera based on Ultra's life story, has recently been completed. She operates studios in both New York City and Nice, France, and is represented by her Parisian gallery, Galerie Heart, at Art Basel (CH). Her work is in the collections of the Museum Pompidou in Paris, the Knokke-Heist Museum in Belgium, and in the private collection of Beth DeWoody, a trustee of the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York.

James Warhola was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 1955. A large influence during his childhood was his artistic family, especially his famous uncle, Pop artist Andy Warhol. From an early age of watching his uncle illustrate shoes, James wanted to be an illustrator. Like his uncle, he attended the famous Tam O' Shanter art classes and graduated from Carnegie-Mellon University in 1977. A move to New York City allowed him to hone his painting skills at the prestigious Art Students League and to do freelance illustration and design work. Warhola's interest in science-fiction, fantasy, and comics landed him in the middle of the publishing world. He established himself as a highly sought after talent, illustrating over 300 book covers for the most popular writers of the day. Two celebrated covers are Robert Heinlein's Stranger in a Strange Land and William Gibson's first cyperpunk classic, Neuromancer. These and many other fantastical images opened other doors. In 1980, the editors at Mad Magazine commissioned him for their paperbacks. This led to him becoming a regular contributor of the magazine ever since. Another related achievement was being selected as one of the primary artists for the very popular Garbage Pail Kid card series. In 1987, an art director handed him a children's book manuscript, instructing him to do as he pleased. It was called The Pumpkinviile Mystery and it became an instant Halloween favorite. He has since illustrated over 30 books, several of which he has written. These works have garnered him several state awards for Best Children's Book and, in 2004, he received the International Reading Association's Award for Best Non-Fiction Picture Book for his autobiographical story, Uncle Andy's. Warhola has been featured nationally on NPR's Weekend Edition, All Things Considered, and Fresh Air. James Warhola splits his time between the Hudson Valley of New York and Baltimore, Maryland. He presently teaches courses on painting techniques for illustrators, oil painting, and water-base painting for the Illustration Department of the Maryland Institute College of Art.

As the niece of Andy Warhol, Madalen Warhola was born into a virtual dynasty of artists. Along with the inspiration from her famous uncle and his Pop Art silkscreening process (Madalen now runs the family silkscreening business, Warhola Designs), she was also trained in the folk art of their ancestral Slovakia by her grandmother Julia (Andy's mother). The detailed, painstaking technique of creating "pysanki" (eggs decorated with encaustic) stirs Madalen's fond memories of her childhood, the ethnic heritage of her family, and loving times spent with her late uncle and grandmother. Madalen holds a Certificate in Technical Drawing and Drafting from the Triangle School of Technology in Pittsburgh (1978). She created and maintains the Warhola family website at HYPERLINK "http://www.warhola.com"www.warhola.com, and, along with other relatives, is developing the Warhola Family Museum in the house where Andy grew up in Pittsburgh. In addition to her work in art, Madalen is a Verbatim Hearing Reporter and a bookkeeper for the family recycling business, begun by her father Paul and now run by her brother Marty, both of whom are also artists.



Ally in the Academy

By Trum Simmons

Epithet? Label? Or None of the Above?

Words: think of the power they have. In this presidential campaign season, how the words have been flying, particularly in the Republican presidential primary.

Any political campaign provides a great opportunity to think about particular kinds of words and how they both help and hurt the gay-rights movement and LGBTQ communities around the nation.

In the South Carolina and Florida Republican primaries, Mitt Romney accused Newt Gingrich of using "over-the-top rhetoric" and called for Gingrich to apologize for his "highly charged epithets." Which leads us to an examination of the words "epithet" and "label."

Both label and epithet can be seen primarily as neutral words, although epithet has obtained a largely negative meaning and falls in the same category as slur; think of a racial epithet. (Epithet began as a mostly positive word; Abraham Lincoln was called "The Great Emancipator," for example.)

The original meaning of label is simply a strip of cloth affixed to something so you know where it was made and by whom. Labels are important in helping us figure out what the world is all about: this is a plant, and that is an animal. Labels can help us determine what's bad for us or good for us; think of edible and inedible, for example.

But we're people, and we don't like being labeled, let alone endure epithets. Over the past 50 years or so labeling someone has come to carry the same negative meaning as using an epithet.

All of us, gay, straight or whatever, do not want to become simply a convenient and oversimplified category, so we use metaphors like being put in a box or pigeonholed when someone is trying to make it easier to understand us.

As March is Women's History Month, it's appropriate to look at two different women as an example of this trend of trying to avoid labels and epithets altogether.

In South Africa, Lindiwe Mazibuko has become the first black leader of the Democratic Alliance party parliamentary caucus, the party trying to gain on the ruling African National Congress (ANC). And as she is member of the political body seen historically as the party of South Africa's white elite, some ANC members and others are saying she is not black enough.

According to The New York Times, Mazibuko has been called a "coconut" and a "tea girl," or servant, for the leader of her party. One of Mazibuko's supporters was quoted as responding to these charges this way. "Can't people be judged for who they are? She's highly intelligent, she's very capable, she's extremely articulate, she's a very good politician, and she's black."

Closer to home, actor Cynthia Nixon has upset some gay activists because after divorcing a man with whom she has had two children she is currently in a relationship with a woman named Christine Marinoni. Nixon considers herself a lesbian, and some say this is disingenuous.

In an interview with The New York Times Magazine, Nixon defended her position that "I've been straight and I've been gay, and gay is better." She has been criticized for implying that sexual orientation is a choice.

"For me, it is a choice," she says." You don't get to define my gayness for me." Regarding her having been with men she says, "I feel like people think I was walking around in a cloud and didn't realize I was gay, which I find really offensive." Whew!

Which brings us back to Newt Gingrich, who is indeed a master of offending people by using epithets, as in calling President Obama the "food stamp president." Newt is the brother of gay-rights advocate (and happily married to her partner Rebecca) Candace Gingrich-Jones. Gingrich opposes same-sex marriage and has no enthusiasm for gay rights; no doubt he's when he speaks publicly about LGBTQ issues lest he utter epithets he might regret.

We'll give Humpty Dumpty the last word on words. In Through The Looking Glass Alice asks him whether you can make words mean anything you want them to and Dumpty says of course you can. "The question is, which is to be the master—that's all."

Sure gives words a lot of power, doesn't it?

Trum Simmons is senior professor of English at Harrisburg Area Community College (HACC) and adviser of The Fourth Estate, the Harrisburg campus student newspaper. He also advises HACC Allies, the LGBTQA student organization.

thinking out loud

By Abby Dees

A tourist's view of what Egypt's new democracy means for LGBT rights

Lessons from Egypt

2011 will be known in large part for the Arab Spring. From my LA home, I felt such camaraderie with those brave, ordinary people who, as if on cue, came together to oust dictators and call for democracy. In Egypt, the word "Tahrir," which once meant only the busy downtown square of cell phone shops, restaurants, tony hotels and the grand Egyptian Museum, now refers to the revolutionary fire that brought down Mubarek and continues to burn into a profoundly uncertain future.

I'm fortunate I actually got to see Tahrir last month – both the place and the expression in Egyptian faces as they hotly debate, over bubbling Sheesha pipes and sweet, thick black coffee, what comes next. Egyptians are impassioned and opinionated about most things and their new democracy is definitely not coming quietly. I am hopeful, but like everyone I spoke to, very worried.

Tahrir is definitely inspiring. How can I not compare it to our American origin story? We are taught that democracy is synonymous with freedom and progress. Now that anything is possible in Egypt, LGBT rights must be part of the discussion, right?

They're not.

As I traveled discretely with my partner, calling her "my friend" through clenched teeth and looking vainly for subtle signs anywhere that we weren't the only gays in town, I felt like I'd time-traveled to the 50s.

Egypt rightly prides itself on its sophistication and comfortable coexistence of different ideas. Homosexuality is not per se illegal. But Egypt is a Muslim country as a matter of law. Subjective notions of what is indecent or offensive to Islam have been used to randomly imprison LGBT people.You might remember the "Cairo 52," half of whom were sentenced to hard labor in 2001 for partying on a boat while gay. Dozens have since been arrested and brutally sentenced for crimes as innocuous as posting on dating sites.

There are worse places to be gay (Uganda springs to mind), but few countries match Egypt for its total suppression of mere conversation about LGBT rights.

But everything that came before January 2011 could change tomorrow. While the military retains a tenuous grip on things for now, elections have begun for the country's new parliament and who will best represent the needs of the people in drafting the new constitution.

Democracy is not magic, as our high school textbooks suggest. Democracy in a country with dwindling resources, crushing poverty, 25 percent illiteracy, and a non-existent government infrastructure (detritus of country-wide corruption) looks a lot like mob rule. The liberal party's talk of secularism and vague freedoms means little when you can't afford propane to heat your food and the only people who seem willing to help are the religious groups canvassing you village and providing discount fuel. Freedom implies choice. To most Egyptians, there are no real choices.

Except perhaps the choice between the fundamentalist Salafists, who would remove women from public life completely, and the much more moderate Muslim Brotherhood who have, more or less, promised to maintain the civil rights status quo. The Muslim Brotherhood are in the lead, mostly because they have their act together and it's better than alternative. But the Salafists are in 2nd place with a shocking 30% of the vote. Remember that only a generation ago, few Egyptian women even covered their heads.

I've always believed that LGBT rights were inextricably connected to women's rights and the end of rigid gender roles. As I watch Egypt retreat into more conservative religiosity for a sense of security, I know a reversal of women's rights is inevitable. I am unable to imagine how LGBT rights in this environment could be anything more than a secret dream for now.

Already knowing the answer, I asked my Egyptian guide if I was being pessimistic. He said no. Egyptians just aren't ready. At home, I'd dismiss such a statement as mealy-mouthed cowardice. Not so in Egypt, or likely any place where with a desperate and uneducated populace – I see that democracy can fast-track regression just as easily as it can bring progress. And how can I not see the same fact at play right at home? I hope I'm wrong. "Inshallah"

Central Sighting – Harrisburg – The Rev. Al Sharpton, a strong supporter of gay civil rights, visited Harrisburg during President Obama's presidential campaign. "Human rights is for everybody," he said that day. Many African-American leaders nationwide do not support gay civil rights. See his latest video on marriage equality. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Aa9QmPkQafc

From Central Voice Files

Creep of the Week: Pope Benedict XVI

By D'Anne Witkowski

You know, whenever I'm in the market for marriage advice, the only person I trust is an unmarried guy in a dress. It also helps if he was also once a Hitler Youth. So you can imagine that whenever Pope Benedict XVI starts dishing out the marriage talk, I am all ears.

In a new year address to a bunch of folks at the Vatican, the pope made it clear that 2012 is still the Year of the Queer, at least if we're categorizing each year by whatever the Catholic Church considers to be the most urgently pressing issue. Which means it's been the Year of the Queer for over a decade now. Past issues have included poverty, world hunger, abortion, and other things that have been long since resolved.

Speaking of the best place for children to be educated, the pope said that "pride of place goes to the family, based on the marriage of a man and a woman." In other words, one penis + one vagina = happy, well-adjusted kids.

"This is not a simple social convention, but rather the fundamental cell of every society. Consequently, policies which undermine the family threaten human dignity and the future of "humanity itself," he said. Oh, my. "Humanity itself," eh? "Somebody" loves himself a little melodrama.

In case it's not clear what exactly the pope means by "policies which undermine the family," he's talking about gays being allowed to marry. Each other. Granted, from what I understand that whole gay man marrying a straight woman or lesbian marrying a hetero dude thing doesn't work out very well. But at least it doesn't threaten all of humanity.

I love how the pope makes clear that marriage isn't a "simple social convention," as if anyone were saying otherwise. As if gays and lesbians just want equal marriage rights because marriage is such an inconsequential institution and wouldn't it be fun and ironic to walk down the aisle and said, "I do."

Nor are gay and lesbian families with kids taking that responsibility lightly. Don't tell the pope, but there is just no evidence that kids with same-sex parents are in any way being harmed by their family structure. In fact, one week after the pope made his remarks Live Science's top story was, "Why Gay Parents May Be the Best Parents."

Granted, where the pope gets the balls to even "talk" about what's best for children is beyond me. As John Aravosis put it, "(W)hy should we care about the moral pronouncements of people who aid and abet the rape of small children?" Ha. That Aravosis. He's such a kidder. I mean, that whole child abuse scandal is so 2002, right?

Um, not so much, actually. Child sexual abuse in the Catholic Church has by no means gone away and anyone who claims otherwise either hasn't done their research or is lying.

So, yeah, I think gays and lesbians are more than entitled to be outright disgusted with the pope's continued gay bashing and homophobia. Let's face it, if a man with as much power and influence as the pope uses his voice to tell an audience of people representing countries worldwide that homosexuals are destroying humanity, then this is not a man who actually cares about human beings, gay or straight.

Black and White Party continued from page 10

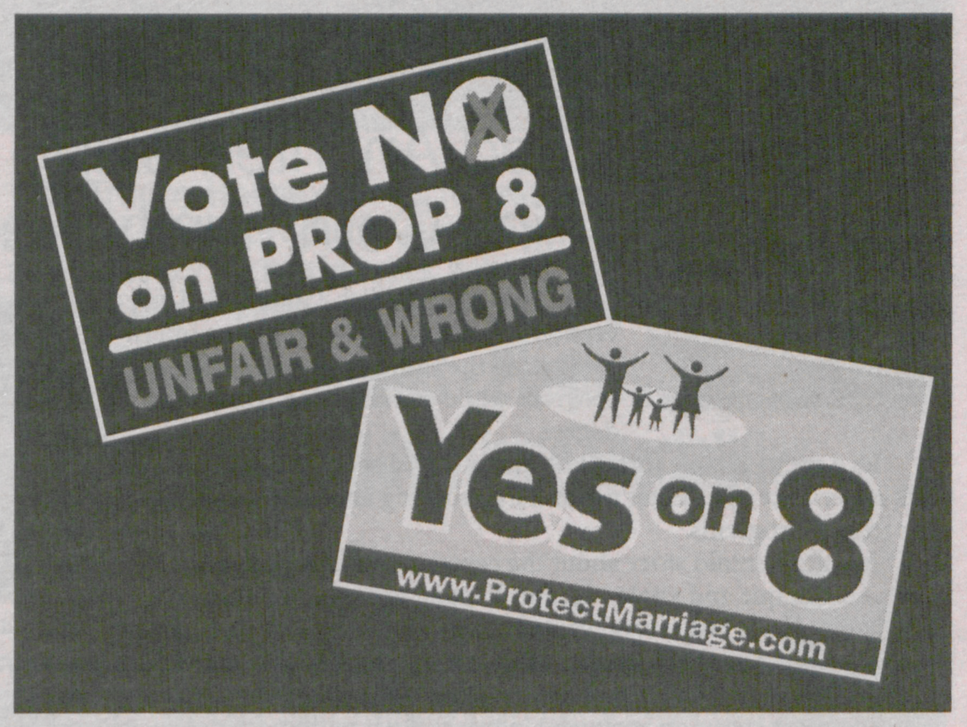
Auctions, Raffle Prizes, food from regional restaurants 6-8 p.m., free and convenient parking, two entertainment stages, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Mark DeRose & The Way Home, 9:30 p.m. Main Stage Show "Love Boat" & Prince Poppycock. The evening closes with Dancing with DJ Ryan Walter.

2012 recipients of funds raised from The Black and White Party are York-based Family First Health, a recipient of Black and White funds since the event's 2007 inception, and Harrisburg-based Alder Health Services, formerly AIDS Community Alliance. Alder Health Services CEO Phil Goropoulos was 2011 recipient of the Black and White John Folby Award in recognition of his work.

The event's 2012 promotional video (1:30 min.) is available at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lz6byGmsR2c&feature=youtu.be

Tickets may be purchased online at http://TheBlackAndWhiteParty.com. $35 advance, $45 door; VIP tickets $100 advance, $125 door. For more details, please contact g.king@TheBlackAndWhiteParty.com; 717-433-0388.

Prop. 8 Ruled Unconstitutional by 9th Circuit Panel



By Jacob Combs and Adam Bink
Prop8TrialTracker.com

Prop8TrialTracker.com reports that Proposition 8 has been ruled unconstitutional by the 9th Circuit Court's opinion in Perry v. Brown. Proposition 8 is the 2008 voter-enacted ban on marriage equality in California.

In addition, the appeals panel ruled that the proponents of Prop. 8 did have standing to pursue their appeal of Judge Walker's decision striking down the marriage ban, and upheld District Court Judge Ware's decision denying a stay to throw out Walker's ruling because he is gay. The ruling on constitutionality was divided on a 2-1 vote, with Judges Stephen Reinhardt and Michael Hawkins voting to strike Prop 8 down, and Judge N. Randy Smith voting to uphold the ban. The ruling regarding standing and the motion to throw out Judge Walker's decision was a unanimous 3-0 vote.

In his August 4, 2010, decision, which the 9th Circuit upheld today, District Court Judge Vaughn Walker struck down Prop 8 as unconstitutional under both the Due Process and Equal Protection clauses of the U.S. Constitution's 14th Amendment. In his opinion, Judge Walker presented 80 findings of fact regarding same-sex marriage, which included discussions about the immutability of sexual orientation, the ability of same-sex couples to be good parents, and the inequality of providing LGBT couples with civil unions as opposed to full marriages. These findings of fact are highly significant, because while appellate courts can overturn a lower court's decision based on its findings of law, they usually defer to those courts' findings of fact. Today's ruling affirms Judge Walker's findings of fact, meaning that they can but used in the future in other trial cases in the 9th Circuit that deal with LGBT rights.

Today's ruling is also significant because the 9th Circuit ruled that District Court Judge James Ware, who took over the Perry case when Judge Walker retired, was correct in denying a motion filed by Prop 8's proponents to overturn Judge Walker's decision on the grounds that he failed to disclose that he himself was in a long-term relationship with a man (which he did announce publicly after the decision was released). In a December 8 hearing on the motion to overturn Judge Walker's decision, the 9th Circuit panel seemed deeply skeptical that Judge Walker's ruling should be thrown out because of his orientation and relationship status. The 9th Circuit's decision today is an important victory for the assumption of impartiality that our judicial system is based on, and demonstrates that LGBT judges are just as fit to preside over cases pertaining to LGBT rights as are their heterosexual counterparts.

What comes next? The first issue on everyone's minds is whether same-sex couples can wed immediately if Prop 8 is struck down. The answer is that it depends on whether a stay is issued in the case. After Judge Walker issued his decision, a stay on his ruling was also issued that kept Prop 8 in effect as a law until such time that another court struck it down, meaning California's same-sex couples have not been able to wed since his ruling. If the 9th Circuit panel or another court body issues a stay, same-sex couples cannot wed. Many legal observers expect a stay if Prop 8 is struck down, however it's not entirely certain.

The other issue on everyone's mind is, what comes next in terms of appeals? The losing side could appeal the decision in one of two ways. First, they could request what is called an en banc hearing. In most appellate courts, this involves the decision by a panel of judges (in this case, the 3-judge panel reviewing the Perry v. Brown case) being reviewed by all the judges on the appeals court. In the 9th Circuit, however (by far the largest appellate court in the country), an en banc hearing involves 11 of the court's judges. In order for this review to occur, a majority of all active judges in the 9th Circuit must vote to rehear it. Many legal observers believe it is unlikely the court would allow an en banc hearing. The losing party could then appeal the case to the U.S. Supreme Court. The Supreme Court has discretion over which cases it decides to hear, and hears arguments in only about 1% of all petitions filed for certiorari (judicial review) each term, so there is no guarantee it would take up an appeal of Perry. If four Supreme Court Justices agree to hear the case, the Supreme Court will review the case.

More Pennsylvania Mayors Join Marriage Equality Campaign

Following the national launch of the Mayors for Marriage Equality campaign, three Pennsylvania mayors have joined the call, according to Equality Pennsylvania.

Four more mayors have decided to join the original three mayors. The Mayors of Doylestown, Easton, Macungie, and Reading have joined the Mayors of Bethlehem, Erie, and Philadelphia in supporting full civil marriage rights for the LGBT community.

"As with other Mayors from Cities around the country, I stand together with them in support of same-sex couples to marry," said Reading's Mayor, Vaughn Spencer announcing his support for marriage equality. Macungie Mayor Rick Hoffman commented, "I am proud to be a part of this national effort to win equal rights for everyone."

"This is more proof for anyone who still needs it that our basic rights are really not that controversial" said Adrian Shanker, Equality Pennsylvania president.

"With Pennsylvania Mayors jumping on the marriage equality train, coupled with polling demonstrating majority support for marriage equality, it is only a matter of time before our legislature will have to catch up with the rest of Pennsylvania and provide equal rights for us all," Shanker said.

Mid-February, Freedom to Marry announced that 100 Mayors, including the Mayors of Boston, Chicago, New York, San Diego, Houston, and Los Angeles, were launching a national effort called "Mayors for Marriage Equality." Initially three Mayors from Pennsylvania signed on: Mayor Callahan of Bethlehem, Mayor Sinnott of Erie, and Mayor Nutter of Philadelphia. Joining them this week are Mayors White of Doylestown, Hoffman of Macungie, Panto of Easton, and Spencer of Reading. Mayor Libby White of Doylestown sees this as an issue of fairness. "All adults have the capacity to love," she said.

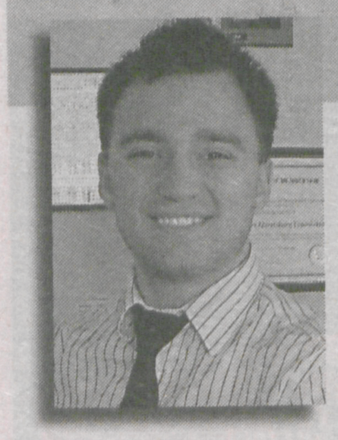
A similar sentiment was echoed by Macungie Mayor Rick Hoffman. "The government has no right to stand in the way of consenting adults wishing to marry."

Mayor Sal Panto of Easton last year signed a domestic partner benefits ordinance into law and previously stated his support for marriage equality. Joining this national effort, Panto said, "No government has the right to tell its citizens who they can marry."

A majority of Pennsylvanians support marriage equality, according to recent independent polling, according to Ted Martin, Executive Director of Equality Pennsylvania. "We applaud these seven mayors for standing up for equal relationship recognition for Pennsylvanians, they are doing the right thing and I hope other Mayors follow in their footsteps." Martin said. Equality Pennsylvania is a statewide organization representing LGBT individuals.

LGBT community center coalition

By Louie Marven
Executive Director
LGBT Community Center Coalition of Central PA



Need An Internship? Think Community Center

Tasha Mercer

Tasha Mercer, '12, Millersville University, serves as a Youth Programs Intern facilitating the Common Roads Lancaster program while working on a social work degree.

It's a pretty simple formula. Students need school credit and work experience; the center needs hard-working and dedicated volunteers to staff programs.

An often untold story about the center and the muscle that makes our unique and vital programs happen is the incredible success we've had over the last several years engaging talented and energetic interns. We've been able to work with interns to assign tasks that match up with their interests and professional goals, and that meet our ongoing staffing needs.

The most common arrangement we make is with master of social work (MSW) students conducting their field placement with Common Roads youth programs. Since the weekly safe space programs take place in the evenings, this project works particularly well for MSW students who also work during regular business hours. Over the past three years, we've had five MSW students working on internships in this program; these students came to us from Millersville University, Temple University Harrisburg, and Shippensburg University.

Currently, Heather Preece is working on her second-year field placement for Shippensburg University's MSW program by planning and facilitating the Common Roads Harrisburg group. Heather plans activities, coordinates volunteers, reaches out to youth participants and gay-straight alliance student groups, and facilitates the weekly Friday night safe space meetings. She has been with The Center since August 2011, and is also in the middle of helping The Center evaluate and update our policy manual.

In January, Tasha Mercer began a semester-long internship with us from the BSW program at Millersville University. Tasha plans and facilitates our Common Roads Lancaster activities, and reaches out to community organizations in Lancaster to make sure the youth services network is aware of our services. Since 2009, we've also welcomed associate- and bachelor-level interns from HACC, York College of Pennsylvania, and Juniata College.

With the center's development of our Central PA LGBT Aging Network (CPLAN), a new need for interns has been created, and we're pleased to have Donald Anklam working with us during his first-year field placement from the MSW program at Temple University Harrisburg. Donald has been interning with us since September 2011, and, most notably, has moved forward our efforts to train local service providers to be savvy about LGBT aging issues. In January, he presented a webinar on LGBT aging issues to over 100 service providers around Pennsylvania through the Pennsylvania Association of Area Agencies on Aging's (P4A's) Long Term Living Training Institute (LTLTI).

I'm proud that the center is able to provide rare opportunities for students in central PA to gain skills and experience doing LGBT community work. These opportunities are few and far between, and our community becomes stronger when we send graduating students into the social services network who understand experiences and challenges of the LGBT community and who are equipped to positively address those challenges. Former intern Lori Covey from Temple University Harrisburg, reflecting on her internship with the center, said:

Interning at the Center was a valuable learning experience on many levels. I walked into it thinking I knew a lot about LGBT people—after all, I have some friends and relatives who are LGBT. Well, I was wrong. The internship really helped me understand current issues the LGBT community faces: bullying of LGBT teens, health issues/access, challenges faced by LGBT seniors, and more, and gave me an opportunity to work on addressing these disparities.

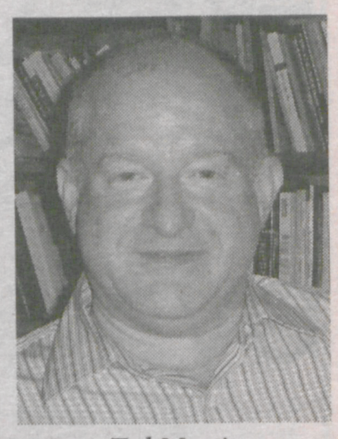
As the school year comes to a close, please keep the center in mind as a potential internship site for you and your student friends! With the development of new programs like Common Roads Carlisle, we are able to accommodate a wide variety of interests, goals, and schedules. Call me at (717) 920-9534 or email me at lmarven@centralpalgbtcenter.org to find out more.

The mission of the LGBT Community Center Coalition is to create common ground for the LGBT community and allies in central Pennsylvania by providing services through educational, spiritual, and cultural activities that foster wholeness.

DON'T ASK. JUST .ning ME.
thecentralvoice.ning.com

Ted Martin & Adrian Shanker Honored as "People of the Year"

Adrian Shanker



Ted Martin

Equality PA executive director, Ted Martin, and current president Adrian Shanker were recently honored by Phila. Gay News as "People of the Year".

As noted in their announcement, PGN cited eight municipalities that had approved LGBT nondiscrimination ordinances in which Martin and Shanker and working to advance each measure. Locally, Susquehanna Township late last year passed a non-discrimination ordinance. Equality PA in its involvement worked closely with local lawmakers, advocates and activists to craft language for the ordinances, as well as raise awareness about the importance of such measures.

Twenty-six Pennsylvania municipalities now have laws protecting against LGBT discrimination.

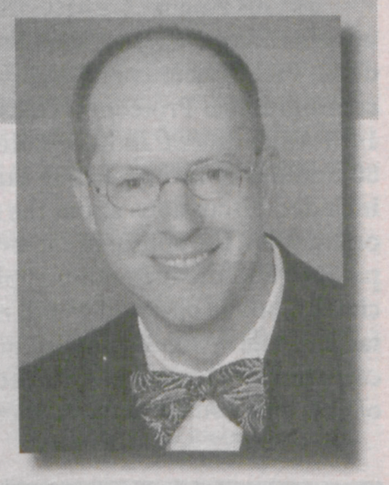
Martin told Central Voice, "Being named a person of the year along with Shanker was both stunning and truly unexpected. But so much of the success of Equality PA is because of numerous activists and community leaders throughout Pennsylvania just standing up and saying that inequality is wrong. They are the true persons of the year, and I am grateful to know and work with so many of them."

Shanker said, "Equality Pennsylvania works every day to expand equality for all LGBT Pennsylvanians. I am proud of our successes this year, but this honor is not meant to say thanks for a job well done, it is meant to send a message to all Pennsylvanians that now is the time to make this state an equal place to live and work for all of us. I extend an open invitation to join us in the fight!"

legal column

By Leo L. Dunn, Attorney at Law

Legal Musings



By now everyone realizes they should have a health care directive, power of attorney, will, disposition of remains instructions and a plan for elder care in place if they are 40 or older. This is especially important for same sex couples since we do not have the same built in protections as opposite sex married couples. We need to worry about property titling, extra insurance, paying taxes on health benefits for our partners, keeping funds separated in case we need Medicare, and the ultimately irritating inheritance tax on 50% of everything the couple accumulated after the first dies! And this even if our families are supportive and loving. Will we ever see this change, and if so, when?

As I write this, we just had a glimmer of hope as well as a look into the paradox. Governor Christy of New Jersey just nominated an openly gay black man for their state supreme court. He had both the nominee and his long term partner on stage at the nomination. Yet he maintains he is against same sex marriage. This dichotomy shows that our society is moving towards being openly accepting and supportive of the GLBT community while still being afraid of moving too fast.

The legal arena is seeing the same paradoxical movements. In California, Proposition 8 was challenged as unconstitutional and the state refused to defend it. The proponents were allowed to present arguments that ended in failure when it was declared unconstitutional by a federal judge. The case is now waiting for the 9th Circuit federal court to make a decision on the appeal. Meanwhile, in Massachusetts, the federal district court declared Section 3 of the federal Defense Of Marriage Act unconstitutional. The case is now being appealed. Interestingly, the Department of Justice is refusing to defend the act. Both cases may be heard by the U.S. Supreme Court.

Both cases showcase governmental actors refusing to defend laws against same sex marriage while the courts struggle with legal precedents and interpretations. If Proposition 8 is declared unconstitutional by the 9th District and not overruled by the Supreme Court, it means same sex Californians may again marry legally. It does not mean all such ballot initiatives are unconstitutional. The decision is only valid for the 9th Circuit. Likewise, the Massachusetts cases only apply to the 1st District if not overturned by the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court may refuse to hear either or both cases. In fact, this is very likely. They may wait to see what the other district courts decide before taking a position. Thus, U.S. law may be a hodgepodge for several years as the courts and politicians continue to sway with their perceived direction of the winds of popular opinion.

So when will we see progress? Every day, but it is like running a marathon, not hitting a homer in the first inning. We need to keep working and showing our neighbors that they should support us in our efforts.

Leo Dunn is an attorney and counselor-at-law practicing in Harrisburg area with a focus on the estate planning needs of the GLBT community. He may be reached at leo@leodunnlaw.com or 717-503-1207.

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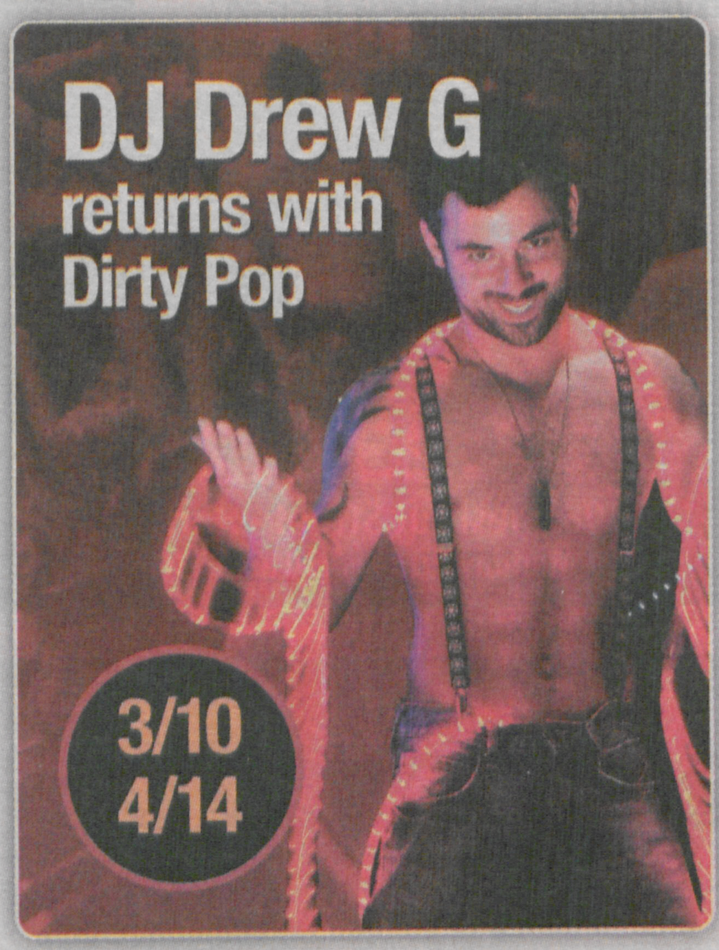

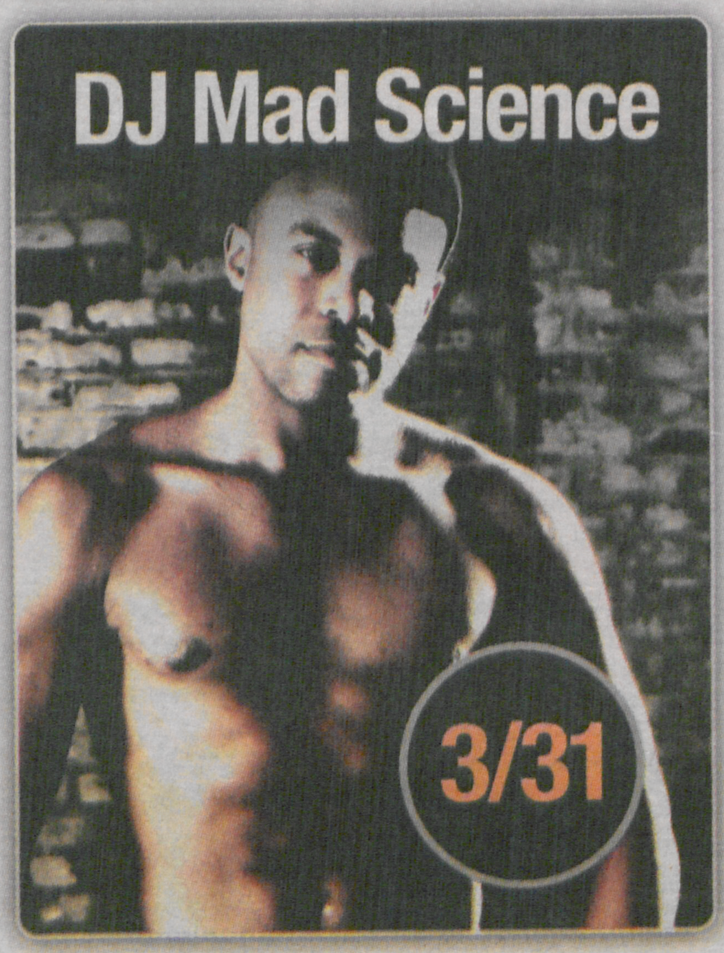

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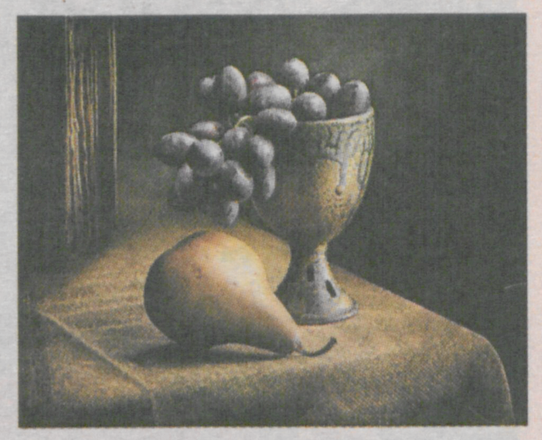
Noted Photographer Demonstrates April 22



Harold Ross presents a slide show of his work followed by a demonstration of his "Sculpting with Light" technique at The Art Association of Harrisburg, 21 N. Front St., April 22, 1-4 p.m. Admission is $10.

During his demonstration, Ross will set up a still-life, photograph it using light painting, and create the final image using Photoshop.

In conjunction with the demonstration, a raffle will be conducted for a signed and numbered folio of Ross's work, entitled "Shopcraft," which will contain 8 images, 8-1/2x11" printed on 100% heavy cotton Hahnemuhle Rag art paper, and a 4-page folded text signature, in a die-cut folder.

Ross has been making landscape and still-life images for more than 25 years, using a specialized technique known as "Painting with Light." Ross prefers to call the process "Sculpting with Light," as his images take on tremendous texture, detail, and dimension, involving "painting" the light on and around subjects in the dark during a long time exposure. His images are rich in color and depth, and in some cases are even reminiscent of oil paintings. His images often take hours to create.

Ross says, "Photography, by its very nature, is born of and lives in the technical realm, and the use and control of light is at the very core of my work. Like many photographers, I make images by adding light to darkness… but I do it differently. In my process, the camera is stationary and I'm in motion, applying the light, choosing what to highlight and what to obscure. I'm shaping the scene in a way that takes it beyond the limits of our everyday vision, for what you see in my photographs cannot exist in nature, nor in one moment in time. Instead, it's the result of a merging or gathering of light."

He goes on to explain that the im-

continued on page 20

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Dr. Mary Edwards Walker: Civil War Surgeon

By Judd Proctor and Brian Burns
Exclusively for Central Voice
National Gay History Project

Known for her determination and strength of conviction, Mary Edwards Walker (1832-1919) is also remembered as the only woman to earn the Congressional Medal of Honor in the United States military, for her service during the Civil War.

Born into the abolitionist family of Alvah and Vesta Whitcomb Walker in Oswego, N.Y., on Nov. 26, 1832, Walker's future relied heavily on her experiences as a child and the encouragement of her father. He planned for all his children to be educated, even building the town's first schoolhouse on his land. Also a self-taught country doctor, it would be his collection of medical books that first sparked Walker's interest in pursuing a medical career.

Walker was the youngest of five daughters and had a younger brother, Alvah. All in the Walker household provided labor for their farm, so their father did not require the girls to wear the women's garb of the time, but instead, attire better suited to the labors of farming. Her parents believed tight-fitting women's clothing items like corsets were unhealthy. This notion would follow Walker in her own pursuit of women's rights and women's dress reform.

Early on, Walker challenged convention by attending medical school. She graduated in June of 1855 from Syracuse Medical College, the United States' first medical school to accept women and men equally. Medical training there consisted of three 13-week semesters, for which she paid $165.

In 1856, Walker married former student, Albert Miller, while wearing a man's coat and trousers. Keeping her last name, Walker and Miller moved to Rome, N.Y., where they began a joint medical practice. But it seemed people of the time were not receptive to seeing a woman physician, and their practice stalled.

Their marriage also suffered since Miller was unfaithful. They separated four years later, and Walker struck out on her own and established her own practice. Unlike her failed attempt in Columbus, Ohio, before her marriage, this new practice seemed to be successful. One of her ads in the Rome Sentinel read, "Those … who prefer the skill of a female physician … have now an excellent opportunity to make their choice."

With her own beliefs grounded in her upbringing, Walker remained in Rome and began advocating for social reform and began writing for the magazine Sybil in 1857. She believed women's attire at the time restricted a woman's freedom of movement and was a barrier to good physical and mental health. Corsets and hoop skirts, she asserted, restricted circulation to the legs and added too much weight for ease of movement. In 1871 she wrote, "The greatest sorrows from which women suffer to-day, are those physical, moral and mental ones, that are caused by their unhygienic manner of dressing!"

Walker's writing appeared in Reform-Dress Association Convention programs and, in 1860, she became one of nine vice presidents elected at the National Dress Reform Association Convention.

With the Civil War's start in 1861, Walker went to Washington, D.C., in the fall of that year in hopes of joining the Union Army as a medical officer. But a woman in trousers who could perform surgery and give medical examinations was unthinkable to those in command, and her enrollment was denied. So Walker volunteered with no compensation, serving under Dr. J.N. Green as an acting assistant surgeon. At times, she performed many of his duties.

Walker was appointed assistant surgeon to the 52nd Ohio Infantry in 1863 and wore a modified version of an officer's uniform. Here, her medical credentials were questioned. In April 1864, she was captured in uniform just south of the Georgia-Tennessee border, taken hostage and imprisoned at Castle Thunder near Richmond, Va., for four months. While there, her complaints of improper rations at the prison saw the addition of wheat bread and cabbage for the prisoners. In August 1864 she was released in a prisoner exchange.

It wouldn't be until Oct. 5, 1964, that Walker would finally be commissioned as acting assistant surgeon, earning $100 a month — thus becoming the first female surgeon commissioned in the Army.

On Nov. 11, 1865, President Andrew Johnson — with the recommendation of Maj. Gens. William T. Sherman and George H. Thomas — signed a bill that gave Walker The Congressional Medal of Honor for Meritorious Service.

The citation recognized her "valuable service to the government," devoting "herself with much patriotic zeal to the sick and wounded soldiers, both in the field and hospitals, to the detriment of her own health," and enduring "hardships as a prisoner of war." The citation also stated that "by reason of her not being a commissioned officer in the military service, a brevet or honorary rank cannot, under existing laws, be conferred upon her" so therefore, "in the opinion of the president an honorable recognition of her services and sufferings should be made."

To this day, Walker remains the only woman to receive the Congressional Medal of Honor for Meritorious Service.

Walker's service record reads:

Dr. Mary E. Walker (1832-1919)
Rank and organization: Contract Acting Assistant Surgeon (civilian), U. S. Army.

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making sense of life

By Dr. Terry Drew Karanen

The Erotic Stirrings of Spring

Spring is nearly here and a little "spring fever" in the air is not unexpected. Just as the Earth beginning to blossom, so too are we affected by the warm-weather and sunnier days. It seems the perfect time for me to write about erotic energy, particularly the kind generated by the males of our species.

Even though it seems at times that our lives as men – gay or straight – revolve around sex, most of us are not all that comfortable talking openly with each other about our concerns surrounding the subject. Part of the problem is that the difference between sexual desire and erotic energy is not separated in our culture. Sexual desire culminates in an act. Erotic energy can be used for so much more, including being receptive to intimate connections with others, sexual and otherwise.

Honoring sex and erotic energy is not easy for most people. Americans are particularly uneasy about sexual matters when compared to our European counterparts. We desire true intimacy, but fear it might lead to sex, while perhaps secretly hoping it will – a most confusing situation! Mainstream religion has pretty much confined sex to the bedroom and then only for legally married, heterosexual adult couples. That leaves the majority of us wanting something we are told we cannot have and should not want…or at least we should delay our desires for a time more appropriate.

Meaningful male-to-male interaction is difficult for most men. Many guys seem able to interact with other males through talk about sports, money or sex. While our culture encourages little girls to nurture and touch, little boys are taught to stand alone and to have life under control. We are not expected to need anyone, particularly another man.

We are told there is room at the top for only one, so we willingly compete against, mistrust and perhaps even mislead other men who are seen as our competitors. For straight men, this means it is next to impossible to express any inner feelings to another man and receive the type of support for which we often search in vain. For gay and bisexual men, we find ourselves attracted to the very persons we are not supposed to trust, then wonder why our relationships fail.

The need for physical contact from members of our own sex is part of our being. Prior to the industrial revolution boys spent more time in the company of men. After the fathers left the fields in favor of the factories, boys were left more in the care of the mother. The separation of father and son, particularly in white America, has continued and worsened in the past century.

Another factor is that for the past century men, gay or straight, have not had a clear idea of who they are, what was expected of them or what they wanted. Men born into Western culture have no rite of passage from boyhood to manhood as was common in centuries past. We are starting to scratch the surface of what it means to be men—not just gay men, but biologically male. We have begun to let each other know what we want and what we want to give.

But today gay men are starting to see deeper into each other than just viewing one another as a sexual conquest. Part of this is due to the evolving consciousness of humanity in general toward a more inclusive society. Another part is that gay men are beginning to mature as a culture. Gay men today are opening up to deeper relationships with each other that do not have to be based on sexual attraction.

As LGBT people, particularly gay men, we have the unique opportunity in this period of history to assist in a global healing process by healing our own issues around intimacy and sex. As we become more comfortable in expressing intimacy with one another, instead of just having sex, we will regain our place in society as the link between the male and female energies. Erotic energy is the core energy of all life. Learning to use erotic energy for more than sex will transform our lives…and our planet.

Info: terry@newthoughtpa.org; www.newthoughtpa.org

Photographer continued from page 19

ages in his series "Night" are in one sense, a furthering of "the opposites are one" concept explored by Photographer Wynn Bullock, whose work is an inspiration for him. Bullock used scale and tonality to advance the notion that "opposites" can enhance and magnify each other, and in fact are often harmonious.

In Ross's work, these opposite elements are more nebulous, and they exist on several levels. An undeniably existent scene, combined with the illusory nature of the lighting, sets up a kind of resonance in the interaction between the real and the unreal. Harold Ross graduated from MICA with a major in photography, and his large-scale color work has been exhibited, collected and published in the US and internationally.

Recent achievements include an invitation to participate in an exhibition in Inner Mongolia, along with 10 other American photographers. Ross's work was recently published in Photo China Magazine and in LensWork #93. He was also chosen as one of four photographers to exhibit in FRESH 2011, at Klompching Gallery in New York. He is represented by Gallery 50 Contemporary Art in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, and teaches workshops on his technique at his Pennsylvania studio.

Info: Ross - Harold Ross www.haroldrossfineart.com; AAH - 717-236-1432; www.artassocofhbg.com.

Dr. Walker continued from page 21

Places and dates: Battle of Bull Run, July 21, 1861; Patent Office Hospital, Washington, D.C., October 1861; following Battle of Chickamauga, Chattanooga, Tenn., September 1863; Prisoner of war, Richmond, Va., April 10, 1864-Aug. 12, 1864; Battle of Atlanta, September 1864; entered service at: Louisville, Ky.; born: 26 November 1832, Oswego County, N.Y."

After Walker's war service, she wrote and lectured on topics on women's rights, dress reform and temperance issues. In 1866 she was elected as president of the National Dress Reform Association. She dressed as a man, including top hat, bow tie and men's pants and shoes. In 1866, she helped Susan B. Anthony and Lucy Stone create the Women's Suffrage Association in Ohio.

In 1917, the U.S. Congress changed the criteria for the Congressional Medal of Honor to include "actual combat with an enemy," and Walker's medal was revoked. That was the same year Walker's health started to decline, having fallen on the Capitol steps in Washington, D.C.

Walker refused to return the medal, and wore it illegally every day until her death in 1919.

For years, friends and family lobbied to have Walker's medal reinstated, and in 1977 President Jimmy Carter signed an order doing just that — citing Walker's "distinguished gallantry, self-sacrifice, patriotism, dedication and unflinching loyalty to her country, despite the apparent discrimination because of her sex."

In 1982, the U.S. Postal Service issued a 20-cent, first-class stamp in commemoration of Dr. Mary Edwards Walker, as a recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor and the second woman to graduate from a medical school in the United States.

Oddly enough, the full-color stamp portrays her wearing a fancy dress and curls. To the contrary, not only did she wear men's clothes, but boasted she had been arrested for impersonating a man.

A description of Walker comes from the U.S. Postal Service which reads, "Dr. Mary Walker was a humanitarian devoted to the care and treatment of the sick and wounded during the Civil War, often at the risk of her own life. A patriot dedicated and loyal to her country, she successfully fought against the sex discrimination of her time. Her personal achievements, as much as her vocal support, significantly contributed to the struggle for women's rights."

Judd Proctor and Brian Burns host "The Rainbow Minute," a community radio show devoted to LGBT history and culture founded in 2006. Proctor is a retired elementary school teacher and staunch gay activist. Burns is an author and horticulturalist. The couple resides in Richmond, Va.

MCC column

By Rev. Lori Rivera, Pastor
MCC of the Spirit

Keeping Grounded

How quickly the year is flying by! It seems like yesterday we were celebrating Christmas and now we are getting ready for Easter. Yet, it really shouldn't be a surprise that time is flying by with all the different things/events that are going on in the community to keeps us busy.

CPLAN has opened the Medical Equipment Loan Closet which is housed at MCC of the Spirit in Harrisburg. The closet will be lending crutches, canes, walkers, wheelchairs, and shower seats to folks of the LGBT community who are 50+ years of age and have little or no insurance.

The LGBT Interfaith Coalition, a project of The Interfaith Alliance of PA, is preparing for a celebration of all the congregations, temples, houses of worship, and spiritual organizations who are open and affirming of the LGBT community. The celebration will take place on March 25 at 4 p.m. at MCC of the Spirit.

And then there are all the events and services of Holy Week. At MCC of the Spirit we are having a Seder teaching on Maundy Thursday, March 5 and a Good Friday service on Friday, March 6. We'll conclude Holy Week with a sunrise worship celebration and a 10 a.m. worship service on Easter.

Through all our "work" it is important for each of us to be grounded. For some of us the "work" we do is our grounding element but for others it is part of the chaos of life. For many of us our grounding element could be in flux as we come to grips with who we are as a LGBT person and deal with our life when we come out. Each of us needs to find that "something" that keeps us grounded. For people who are part of a religious community, God - our higher power, is what grounds us. It helps to keep the chaos corralled. It is like an anchor of a boat. The anchor doesn't stop storms or waves but it does keep the boat in place. What grounds us doesn't keep chaos or difficult times from coming into our lives but it does enable us to handle the touch times.

As we move into spring and begin to gear up for more events and fundraisers leading up to Pride celebrations in July find what grounds you. Maybe it will be your family, a friends or a special someone in your life. But if what grounds you is God, come and join us at MCC of the Spirit. Join us as we worship God and "work" to help others in our community.

LGBT health

By Cassandra Weber, CRNP
Alder Health Services

How's Your Heart?

Valentine's Day has come and gone leaving lingering thoughts of romance and spring is in the air stirring thoughts of getting outside into the fresh air. The heart shaped symbols of Valentine's Day and romance make me think of heart health, both physical and emotional, and the fresh air of spring makes me think of getting outside and moving. As I mentioned in my last column, the LGBT community faces unique health risks and disparities, including heart health and fitness.

How healthy is your heart, both emotionally and physically? How do you measure the health of your heart? There are many factors figuring into this equation including those that we have control over, such as what we eat, weight, tobacco, and substance use, stress, and blood pressure, and those we simply cannot control such as genetics and ethnicity.

Alder Health Services

First, let's discuss our emotional heart health. Emotional heart health helps lead to success in relationships, work, and health. And just like physical heart health, emotional health doesn't just happen and you need to pay attention to it all the time, not just when something goes wrong. Emotional health requires regular care and maintenance. Also, health does not mean simply the absence of disease. If you have a mental illness such as depression or anxiety, you can still be emotionally healthy.

Life today can be busy and stressful. And as a member of the LGBT community you may face even more stressors such as discrimination and a lack of support, which make it even more important to really look at your emotional health. Do you make time for yourself? Do you seek out the company of positive and supportive people? Engaging in your community is a great way to meet other people who have experienced similar stressors and find out what worked for them. Or if you have life lessons to share, you could mentor someone in the community.

Other ways to maintain your emotional heart health include learning new things, limiting un-healthy habits like worrying, managing stress levels, making time to engage with others face to face, and making time for you a priority. Another great way to maintain your emotional heart health is to maintain your physical heart health.

Earlier I mentioned factors that we do and do not have control over that impact our health. Let's focus on the factors that we do have control over. Blood pressure and cholesterol do have genetic components but there are still many things you can do to keep your levels normal. The first step is to know your numbers. What is your blood pressure? Have you had your cholesterol checked? What we eat, our weight and activity level have a huge impact on our blood pressure and cholesterol, as well as overall heart health.

Other health habits also play an important role in physical heart health, blood pressure, and cholesterol levels. Alcohol, tobacco and drug use, rest, and activity levels all impact our physical heart health. Limit alcohol to 1 serving a day for women and 2 servings per day for men at the most. And no, you cannot save up all your daily servings for the weekend. There are no safe levels of tobacco or drug use. If you need help with quitting any substances, talk with your health care provider. Are you getting enough sleep at night? Busy lifestyles often mean we sacrifice quality sleep for other things, but sleep is the body's time to repair itself mentally and physically. And lastly, how active are you? If you exercise regularly – great! Keep it up! If it's been a little while since you've had those muscles moving and heart pumping, start slow. It's always a good idea to talk with your health care provider to be sure that you are ready to start exercising.

Look at your health habits and see where you could make some improvements to benefit both your emotional and physical heart health. Make a list of reasons, such as, I want to feel better about myself or I want my heart to be healthy. Find a buddy to encourage you and for you to encourage. Support in your improved health habits is a tremendous benefit! And don't forget to ask for help. Change is not easy and we don't always have all the information we need. Your health care provider can give you guidance or point you towards good resources. Here's to a happy, healthy, 2012!

Cassandra Weber is a certified registered nurse practitioner at Alder Health Services, which specializes in meeting the unique needs of individuals living with HIV/AIDS, the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community, and individuals who are struggling with addiction.

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Texas Coast:

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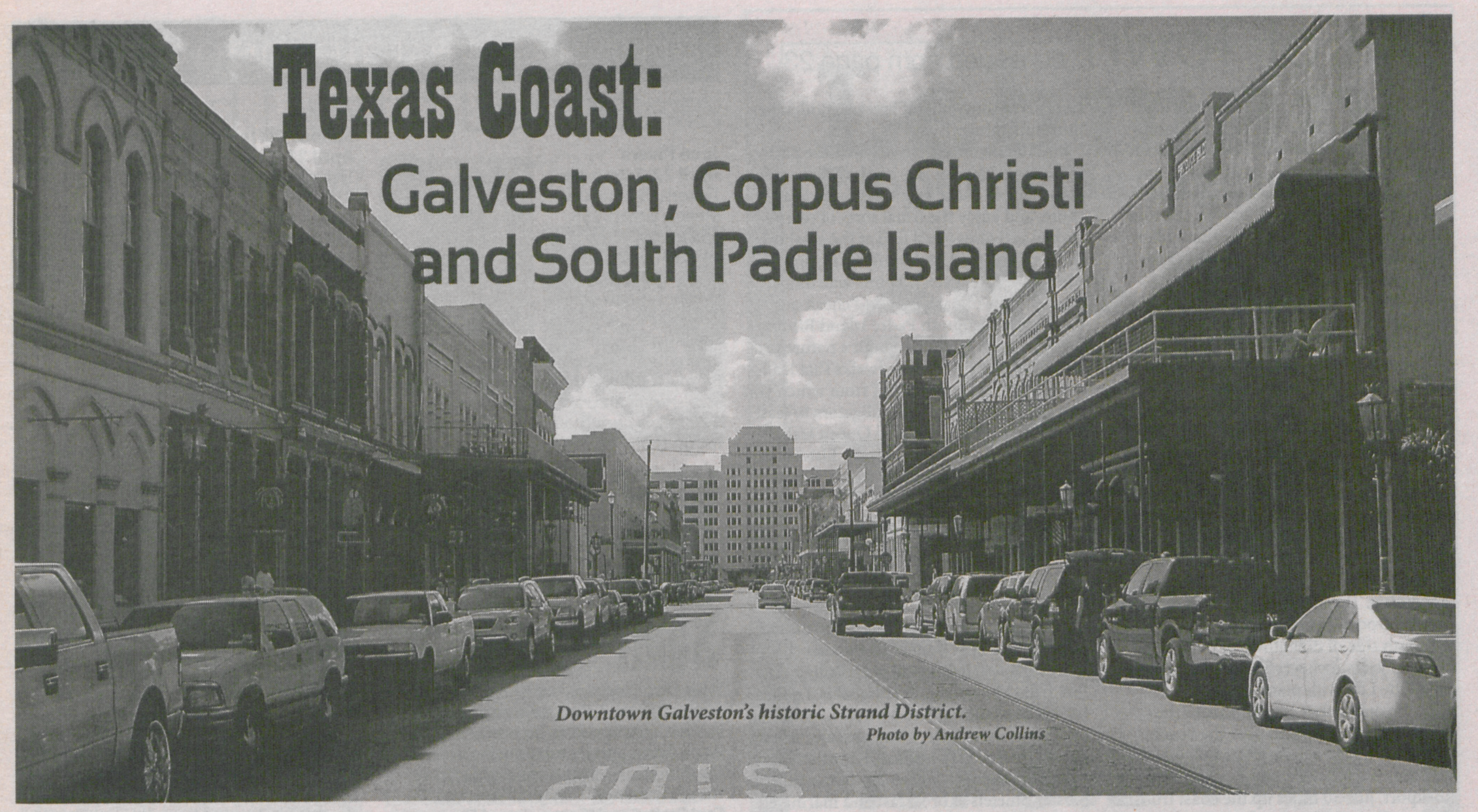

Downtown Galveston's historic Strand District.
Photo by Andrew Collins

Although America's Gulf Coast doesn't have any major gay beach resorts, the Texas barrier island of Galveston has steadily become a popular destination with GLBT travelers. About 220 miles south, the coast's largest city, Corpus Christi, contains a number of notable attractions as well as the coast's only gay bar south of Galveston. And at the southern tip of the Texas coast, scenic South Padre Island has developed increased cachet as a getaway, thanks in part to biannual Splash South Padre Island gay parties.

OUT OF TOWN
by Andrew Collins

Here's a look at these three classic coastal getaways in Texas.

Galveston

The historic and charming city of Galveston (www.galveston.com) is a haven of sandy beaches, opulent Victorian houses, and touristy but engaging seafood restaurants and souvenir shops. Gays and lesbians – many from Houston, 50 miles inland – regularly visit here. With colorful architecture, a small but discernible arts scene, and a laid-back demeanor reminiscent of Key West and New Orleans, this city of 48,000 is a bit more open-minded and offbeat than any other on the Texas Gulf Coast.

Galveston occupies a narrow, 32-mile-long, windswept coastal island. Several historic neighborhoods abound with stately old mansions and cheerful clapboard cottages, and the main drag along the shoreline, Seawall Boulevard, bustles with seafood restaurants, chain hotels, and shops selling postcards, seashells, swimsuits, and sunglasses.

If you're a beach lover, you'll want to hang out around the shorefront neighborhoods, but the city's vibrant and quirky personality reveals itself most strongly a couple of miles north, in the downtown Strand Historic District, which overlooks Galveston Bay. This warren of palm-shaded cobblestone lanes is punctuated by a few tall buildings.

There are numerous attractions to keep you busy around Galveston, the most famous being the Moody Gardens, a dazzling nature-oriented complex consisting of three huge pyramidal buildings housing a vast tropical rain forest, an aquarium, and a science museum. Other points of interest include downtown's Ocean Star Offshore Drilling Rig and Museum, in which you can explore an actual retired oil rig; the dramatic 1894 Grand Opera House, which now presents theater and music events; and the Texas Seaport Museum, which is home to 1877 Tall Ship Elissa.

If you start to feel a little peckish, downtown's festive Yaga's Cafe (www.yagaspresents.com) is a longtime favorite for casual Caribbean-inspired fare. For extremely tasty Latin American and Mexican fare, including delicious Gulf snapper ceviche, head to Rudy & Paco (www.rudyandpaco.com). A spacious, elegant restaurant overlooking Galveston Bay, Willie G's (www.williegs.com) serves huge and rich portions of seafood, including lump crab au gratin and snapper Kathleen (blackened with shrimp, crab, mushrooms, and lemon butter). Gay-popular Mosquito Cafe (www.mosquitocafe.com), despite its pesty name, might just serve the most sophisticated and polished contemporary cuisine in town. This charming space with tall windows exudes understated elegance. Gay-friendly MOD Coffeehouse (www.modcoffeehouse.com) is one of the best places in town for espresso and tea drinks, plus decadent desserts.

The city has a few gay bars. The friendly and festive 3rd Coast Bar (www.3rdcoastdowntown.com) overlooks the Gulf and has a small deck outside. Robert's Lafitte is another neighborhood bar with an easy-going personality. A relative newcomer that's quickly become popular, Stars Beach Club (starsbeachclub.com) is a great spot for dancing. And the Pink Dolphin (pinkdolphingalveston.com) is a low-key neighborhood gay bar that's a favorite with locals. The dapper Bacchus Wine Bar (www.bacchus-wine-bar.com) serves a nice range of wines (and beers) by the glass - this mixed hangout is a fun place for drinks before or after dinner along the Strand.

Galveston claims a pair of Texas's most renowned historic hotels, and both of them are quite gay-friendly. Anchoring the heart of downtown's Strand Historic District, the Tremont House (www.wyndham.com) captures the elegance and warmth of a European boutique hotel. The hotel's 119 rooms have marble baths and fluffy pillow-top bedding. A 10-minute drive south, the imposing Hotel Galvez (www.wyndham.co) offers a more peaceful setting overlooking the Gulf of Mexico. Although rooms have every amenity, the period decor thoroughly recalls the city's gilded era. You can sip cocktails at the pool's swim-up bar or relax to piano music over the Sunday champagne brunch. Among mainstream B&Bs, the gay-friendly Avenue O B&B (www.avenueo.com) is a romantic, imaginatively decorated inn set in the city's historic Silk Stocking District. The 1923 Mediterranean Revival house overlooks beautifully landscaped grounds.

Corpus Christi

With a population of just over 300,000, Corpus Christi (www.visitcorpuschristitx.org) is the largest community along the Texas coast - it's about a 4.5-hour drive south of Galveston, and it's just a 2.5-hour drive down I-37 from San Antonio. The city enjoys a sheltered setting on Corpus Christi Bay, which separates it from Padre Island. From downtown Corpus Christi, it's an easy drive to the island, which is home to popular seaside attractions like Mustang Island State Park and the scenic town of Port Aransas.

A fairly conservative city with a strong military presence, Corpus Christi has a limited gay scene but is home to several noteworthy attractions. At the north end of downtown, the outstanding Art Museum of South Texas and Museum of Science & History anchor a waterfront cultural district that also includes the first-rate Harbor Playhouse Theatre as well as a complex of restored historic houses known collectively as Heritage Park.

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Out of Town continued from page 23

Just a bit north, the Harbor Bridge leads to the North Beach neighborhood, which is home to the world's oldest surviving aircraft carrier, the World War II-era USS Lexington, which is now an impressive floating museum. Next door, you can tour the excellent Texas State Aquarium, home to sea turtles, river otters, piranhas, and three graceful bottlenose dolphins.

Downtown's upscale Omni Corpus Christi Hotel Bayfront Tower (www.omnihotels.com) as well as the stylish and more intimate V Boutique Hotel (www.vhotelcc.com) are reliable, gay-friendly lodging options close to local attractions - they're both a short walk from Water Street Market (www.waterstreetmarketcc.com), a lively hub of restaurants, shops, bars, and a cool little museum dedicated to Texas surf culture. Here you'll find an excellent coffeehouse, Agua Java, as well as the Water Street Seafood Co. and Oyster Bar and the Executive Surf Club - all good places for drinking and dining. The main gay club in town, the Hidden Door (thehiddendoorcc.com), is on the south side of downtown and has good drink specials, a cheery patio, and a side bar called the Loft with piano cabaret.

If you'd rather stay outside of the bustle of downtown and near the beach, Anthony's by the Sea (www.anthonysbythesea.com) is a terrific, lesbian-owned B&B in Rockport, just 30 miles up the coast from Corpus Christi. This comfy six-room property is just a few blocks from Aransas Bay, and rates include a hearty breakfast, which you can enjoy on the shaded patio.

South Padre Island

The southernmost Gulf Coast town in the United States, bustling South Padre Island (www.sopadre.com/island) has long been famous as a family vacation spot, more recently as a Spring Break destination flooded with college students, and in just the past few years as the site of two raucous and fun gay circuit parties, known as Splash South Padre Island (splashsouthpadre.com) - it's held twice a year, once in late April and then again in the fali (usually late October or early November). Check the website for dates, as they're usually announced a few months in advance of these parties.

A word about the geography of the area, which can be confusing for outsiders. Padre Island is the world's longest barrier island and the second-largest island in the Lower 48 (after Long Island). It extends for some 130 miles from just east of Corpus Christi, where it's generally called North Padre Island, all the way down to the tip. Because the central section of the island is preserved wilderness, you can't drive from the northern to southern parts. The town of South Padre Island is the only substantially developed part of the island, and from Corpus Christi you get here by taking U.S. 77 south to Highway 100 east - it's about a 3.5-hour drive.

Splash South Padre Island is a fun time to visit, drawing revelers from throughout the South and increasingly from all over the country. With a mild climate, a couple of miles of beautiful beachfront, and a restaurant scene that's become steadily more sophisticated, this narrow island community is a terrific destination year-round, especially from fall to spring, when the weather is mild (it can be a little toasty in summer, although Gulf breezes moderate the temperatures).

The preferred activity in these parts is relaxing: you can laze on the beach, ride horseback at Padre Island National Seashore, and enjoy the usual sorts of recreational activities you'd find at the seashore: fishing, boating, kite-boarding, surfing, snorkeling, and even dolphin-watching cruises. Fans of nature should check out the fascinating South Padre Island Birding Center, which comprises both a nature center and a network of boardwalks that lead out along the bayfront (and from which you can spot everything from alligators to least sandpipers). Just across the Queen Isabella Causeway on the mainland, the historic village of Port Isabel contains shops, restaurants, a marina (with boat tours), a historic lighthouse, and other amusements.

Seafood is a highlight in the area, with the Dirty Al's/Daddy's (dirtyals-daddys.com) restaurant group among the top contenders - they have locations both on the island and across the bay in Port Isabel, and fried shrimp, oysters on the half shell, and blackened fish are all outstanding. The low-frills Manuel's in Port Isabel is a good bet for outstanding Tex-Mex fare, including enormous breakfasts. More upscale, urbane options include stylish Cafe Kranzler (www.cafekranzler.com), where specialties include lobster omelets at breakfast and marinated sesame-crusted ahi at dinner; and Zeste, a gourmet market and restaurant known for creatively prepared tapas, salads, sandwiches, and other healthy fare.

There are no gay bars on South Padre Island, but establishments like Mooncussers (www.mooncusserspi.com) and Louie's Backyard (www.lbyspi.com) are always welcoming and often host GLBT parties during Splash weekend. And inland, you'll find gay bars in some of the border cities, like Studio 69 in Brownsville (30 miles southwest) and PBD's in McAllen (75 miles west).

South Padre is lined with beach resorts and condos, many of them facing the Gulf and others set along the bay (it's just a few blocks from one side to the other). Most properties are moderately priced, with one of the nicest being a relatively new Hilton Garden Inn (www.hiltongardeninn.com) across from the Birding and Nature Center. A small, friendly spot on the beach with spacious, nicely updated suites, Palms Resort (palmsresortcafe.com) is one of the best values on the island - rooms have kitchenettes and nice-size sitting areas, and the on-site cafe overlooking the water serves tasty, casual food. There are also a few value-priced properties that offer special rates during Splash and are always very gay-welcoming: Comfort Suites, La Copa Inn, and Suites at Sunchase.

Andrew Collins covers gay travel for the New York Times-owned website Gay-Travel.About.com and is the author of Fodor's Gay Guide to the USA.

arts & entertainment

Joan Rivers
April 22, 7:30 p,m.
Tickets: $95 (includes Meet & Greet), $65, $55 and $40
717-534-3405;
1-800-745-3000;
HersheyTheatre.com

Comedic legend Joan Rivers is an internationally renowned comedienne, Emmy-winning television talk show host, Tony-nominated actress, best-selling author, playwright, screenwriter, and the list goes on.

West Side Story
March 20 – 25
Tickets: $85, $80, $70, $75, $65, $25
717-534-3405;
1-800-745-3000;
HersheyTheatre.com
More than 50 years ago one musical changed theater forever. It's back. West Side Story soars as the greatest love story of all time. Bernstein and Sondheim score is considered to be one of Broadway's finest and features such classics of the American musical theatre as "Something's Coming,""Tonight,""America,""I Feel Pretty" and "Somewhere." The tour is the same production as the recent Broadway revival directed by Arthur Laurents with Spanish dialogue and lyrics.

Court Street Cabaret
March 16 & 17, 8 p.m.
Tickets: 717-232-OPEN (6736); Walk-up M-F 12:30-3 p.m., Box office in lobby, 223 Walnut St., on street level of Walnut Street Parking Garage, downtown Harrisburg
Stuart Landon is back with all his friends for another rousing rendition of Court Street Cabaret this season! The best of Broadway and beyond is sure to please your ears and leave your toes tappin'.

Illusionist Jason Bishop
Sunoco Performance Theater
May 5, 7:30 p.m.

Tickets: $22.50, $28.50, 717-214-ARTS (2787)
As America's Hottest Illusionist, Jason Bishop might have a person passing through his body one moment or make goldfish appear from nowhere the next. Bishop is an international award-winning illusionist who was the youngest person to win the Magician's Alliance of Eastern States Stage Award and one of the youngest people to compete in the Society of American Magicians World-Class competition.

Giselle
Sunoco Performance Theater
April 21, 1 p.m. & 7 p.m.; April 22, 2 p.m.
Tickets: Child (12 & under) - $14, $15, $25, $38
Adult - $14, $20, $30 & $38.

The most celebrated ballet of all time, Central Pennsylvania Youth Ballet unveils Alan Hineline's dramatic staging of a tale of love, betrayal and forgiveness in the story of Giselle.

Flying Karamazov Brothers
March 11, 4 p.m.
Strand Theatre
Tickets: $22, $32, $36

If you see one group of multi-faceted new-vaudevillians at the apex of their ambidextrous and alliterative ability, see The Flying Karamazov Brothers. They are not your father's wild-haired, juggling, flame-throwing, kilt-and-tutu wearing performers. Each night, the audience is invited to bring objects to the theater for the FKBs to keep airborne in a challenge that ends either with a pie in the face or a standing ovation.

"Every Time I Think of You" Set in Greensburg, Pa.

Popular gay author Jim Provenzano's latest book "Every Time I Think of You" opens after an abrupt encounter in a small woods of Greensburg, Pa. Reid Conniff, a shy and studious high school distance runner, becomes swept up in the adventurous world of Everett Forester, a privileged and capricious charmer. The year is 1978.

Readers may remember Provenzano's other three novels, most notably PINS (1999) about gay high school wrestlers. Monkey Suits (2003) about gay caterwaiters in 1980s Manhattan, and Cyclizen (2007) about a gay bicycle messenger in 1990s New York City, both fictionalize his experiences in AIDS activism. Nearly two dozen anthologies include his short stories and essays.

Open Stage Selected to Read Dustin Lance Black's New Play "8"

Open Stage of Harrisburg joins nationwide productions of Dustin Lance Black's landmark marriage equality play "8". Black is the Academy Award-winning screenwriter of Milk, and J. Edgar. The reading is May 6, 7 p.m.

Equity Actor Hollis Scarborough, left, works with pianist David Glasgow, center, and Open Stage's Stuart Landon, right, in "Classroom180," an Open Stage program bringing professional New York City actors the 180 miles here where they will lead workshops on musical theatre dance, voice, performance and discuss professional experiences. The program last worked with Susquehanna Township High School's Spring musical, Hairspray, and other students. *Central Voice photo*

For the event, Open Stage is partnering with American Foundation for Equal Rights (AFER) and Broadway Impact for the one-night-only play reading. The story chronicles the historic trial in the federal constitutional challenge to California's Proposition 8, written by AFER Founding Board Member and Academy Award-winning writer Dustin Lance Black. "8" is an unprecedented account of the Federal District Court trial in Perry v. Schwarzenegger (now Perry v. Brown), the case filed by AFER to overturn Proposition 8, which stripped gay and lesbian Californians of the fundamental right to marry. Black, who penned the Academy Award-winning feature film Milk and the new critically-acclaimed film J. Edgar, based "8" on the actual words of the trial transcripts, first-hand observations of the courtroom drama and interviews with the plaintiffs and their families.

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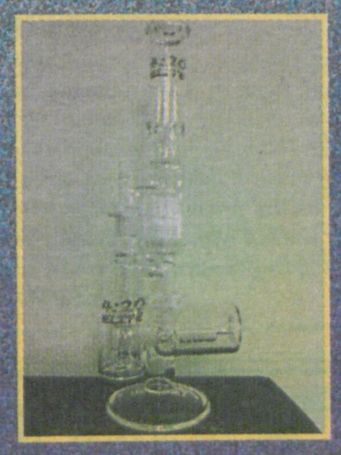

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Madonna Expresses Herself

Gay icon relates herself to 'strong women' in new film, talks being an outsider and the latest era of her career

By Chris Azzopardi

With all of Madonna's metamorphoses throughout her balls-out career, slipping in and out of cultural zeitgeists (and accents), the queen chameleon is still the master of reinvention. Just don't tell her that.

"Please don't throw those tired, old clichés at me," Madonna playfully insists, nodding her head at me in half-kidding agitation. (Hey, at least it wasn't hydrangeas.)

Her annoyance is marked with cheekiness – and a smile – that only the First Lady of Pop can pull off, and has for three decades. This is a new chapter in the indelible diva's run, as she drops her hyped 12th album, "MDNA", in March via a three-disc deal with Interscope; plans to launch an extensive world tour; does, perhaps, the gayest Super Bowl halftime ever; and releases her feature-length directorial debut "W.E.", a pet project that recently won her a Golden Globe for Best Original Song.

And she – sexpot, spiritualist, Material Girl – really only has one word to define herself at the moment: "Busy." Always unpredictable, she's not interested in breaking down the details of what's to come. All she cares to talk about is the film, a semi-biopic on Wallis Simpson (played by Andrea Riseborough) and King Edward VIII dovetailed with a modern-day love story centered on fictionalized damsel-in-distress Wally Winthrop (Abbie Cornish).

Seated with Madonna at a Waldorf-Astoria suite in New York City on a December afternoon, one writer tells her he has a question to kick off the interview. "I'm sure you do," she quips all-knowingly, as if to acknowledge the fact that she's aware how much gay men go gaga over her. This is, after all, the room reserved for a small group of gay press, her first stop after a tardy arrival – "It's all too much. That's why I'm late! I'm late for everything now." – and the

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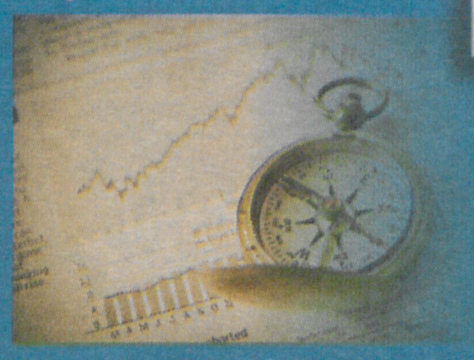

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Madonna continued from page 27

one her longtime publicist, Liz Rosenberg, insists will put her in a good mood for the rest of the day. Madonna agrees, sighing: "Let's start with levity."

Madonna's in her groove around us. She knows we get her even when she's wielding snarky cracks. Ask her if she knows how to do the twist like the characters in her film and she responds: "Yes." Hard pause. "Pretty simple." Reminisce on when you last interviewed Madonna and she won't care. "All right, let's get down to business," she insists, done with small-talk.

And so we do. Looking stunningly flawless, not at all her 53 years, in a deep blue dress with her now-infamous black gloves and a bracelet of four crosses to represent each one of her children, she gives us exactly what we want: Madonna. No pretense. No filter. No warm-and-fuzzy. In the interview, she talks about the challenges of being a strong woman in a man's world, teaching her children to be unique and how outsiders can relate to her new film.

What similarities do you see between Wallis and Evita?

What they have in common is what many people have in common who are public figures, who become iconic and who have some kind of historical impact, especially women – strong women. People have a tendency to feel intimidated by the strength of these women, and in order to accept – actually, the word "accept" is wrong, because I don't think they're actually accepted. I think in order to deal with them, a lot of people who write history books, and humanity in general, have a tendency to diminish women or undermine their accomplishments or try to portray them as heretical or as someone with an evil possession of some kind of sorcery, or undermine their strength or intelligence, so I think they have those things in common. Now I'm not saying that Eva Peron is without flaws or that Wallis Simpson was this perfect holy human being, but I do think they were both dealt with in a very unfair way in the history books.

Have you felt that way?

(Laughs, expecting the question) Well, yeah, sure. Yes, of course. I mean, I don't think it's just me. It's strong women in general.

Why?

Why? Because… (hesitates)

You're a threat?

No. It's just the nature of the universe. It's the nature of the world that we live in. We live in a patriarchal society and strong women have to…

Challenge that?

No. They're held under a microscope and judged and measured in a different way. That's just the law of the universe right now.

The film is driven by a contemporary woman's view of this historical figure. Do you see anything in your story that may, or that you hope one day may, do the same for someone else?

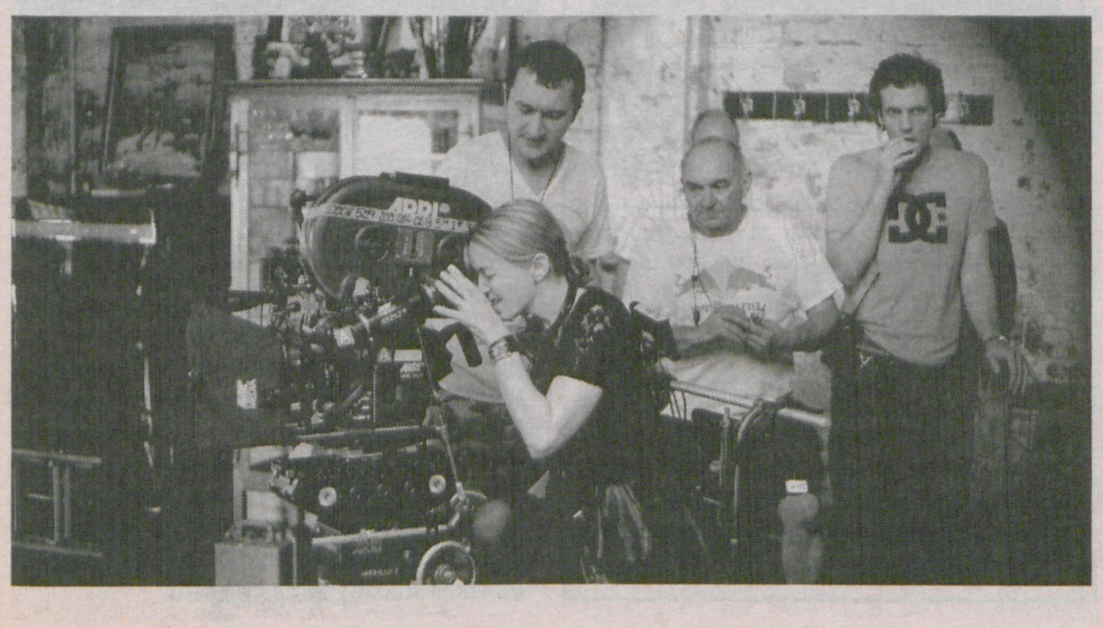
The Duchess is really Wally's spiritual guide, so to speak, and even though she (the Duchess) came from a different era where women didn't have the same kind of choices and opportunities, we as women still are all raised on this fairytale idea that no matter how many opportunities we have education-wise or job-wise, your knight in shining armor is going to arrive on his beautiful white stallion and sweep you off your feet and take you off into the twilight, and you're going to live happily ever after.

This is something that we all have to deal with when we grow up. But one person isn't going to be all of those things to us; ultimately, we have to make our own happiness, and when we can own that and take responsibility for our own happiness, then we can find a mate for ourselves, or companion or significant other or whatever you want to call it. That's certainly what the Duchess imparts to Wally, and I hope that I can inspire other women to think that way with my own life and behavior.

What's the thing that surprised you most about Wallis Simpson while doing your research?

The discoveries that Wally makes in her journey and her investigations were essentially mine. When I heard about the story – what a magnanimous, generous romantic gesture Edward VIII made toward Wallis Simpson – I thought the same thing that Wally says when she's looking in the mirror trying on the necklace: "What must it feel to be loved that much?"

As I started to unravel the story and read the letters and go on the journey that I went on to write the script, I realized that, in fact, it wasn't this fairytale romance as I had imagined it would be. I found that Wallis Simpson tried to avoid the actual marriage from taking place and how she saw the writing on the wall and how she tried her best to get Edward to see the writing on the wall. She was very astute in her observations, but obviously she couldn't talk him into her point of view. He was just cunt-struck, as they say in England. (Laughs at her choice of words) Sorry!



Did you ever think of making the movie without the contrasting modern-day story of someone reflecting on a historical figure?

No. I wasn't interested in making a straightforward biopic. I don't think it's possible to tell the story of one person from beginning to end in two hours. I think that's actually an unfair challenge to give oneself. And also, truth is so subjective and each of us could read the same five books about the Duke and Duchess of Windsor and we would walk away with a different interpretation. It would impact us in a different way, and so it was important for me to establish that. As much research as I did, and as close as I tried to stay to the truth and as authentic as I wanted to be, it was important that I be clear that it is a point of view. I never intended to just tell the story of Wallis Simpson.

What's the importance of telling this story from your point of view?

Most of the perspective on the story is, "Look what he gave up for her," and it's told from the male point of view. I think that when Wally starts to make all these discoveries about the Duchess, she appeals to Mohamed Al Fayed (keeper of the Duke and Duchess' letters) as an outsider, because he lives as a foreigner and as an outsider in England, not really accepted by society.

Really, in my movie, each character is an outsider. Wally is living in alienation in the Upper East Side, where she doesn't fit in; (Wally's love interest) Evgeni is a Ukrainian immigrant working as a security guard, but he's really an intellectual and an artist and he doesn't fit in; the Duchess doesn't really fit into this aristocratic world that she's found herself in, and Edward doesn't really fit into the Victorian world that he was raised in. So it's how all these people who feel like outsiders try to come to terms and find their way in the world.

Is that something you draw from your own experience?

Yeah, but I think a lot of people can relate to it. A lot of us feel like we don't fit into the conventional norm or what society expects from us. More and more, people are redefining what makes a family, what makes a couple, what makes love, what romance is, what a union is, what soul mates are – all of these things we're reinventing, because family is what you make it. It's funny how things turn out that way. Sometimes your parents aren't really the people who nurture you. You have other role models in your life that become your mother and your father. It's unusual when the family you're born into is actually the people that feel like your family.

Growing up, you rebelled against your upbringing and convention, becoming a major trailblazer. How is it different being a mother with kids who will not have to fight the same battles that you fought?

Not that this has anything to do with my film, but it's an interesting question. I don't think that I'm a conventional parent. I realize that, to a certain extent, my children are raised with privilege; they have housekeepers, I didn't. There are a lot of differences. On the other hand, my parents raised me in a very conventional way and I rebelled against it, and now my children come to me and they often want to do things because everybody else does them, and I say to them, "That's just the worst reason I've ever heard for doing something."

I encourage them to question things. Question their behavior, take responsibility for their behavior, think outside the box. And they will have a different set of challenges. They will be compared to me. I will be some kind of a benchmark that they have to live with and deal with, and they are going to have to find their way in the world. We are all born with, and into, our challenges, so I don't think for a second that life is going to be so simple and easy for them.

Do you feel like all your years of research on Wallis Simpson is over with, or are you still invested in her?

I'm done with my deep research, but I still feel a strong connection to her. She's always going to be a part of me. I am still uncovering little gems about her. People come to me and say, "Oh, look at this little note that we found in this handbag that was auctioned off 20 years ago." People are still bringing me bits and bobs and memorabilia, so I'm still discovering things about her – and I'm sure I will for the rest of my life.

I was actually going through my papers in my files the other day and found an astrological reading that someone had done for me 30 years ago. I was reading it, and the woman was talking about some aspect of my personality and she quoted Wallis Simpson: "All for love and the world well lost." I thought, "How weird, she was already a part of my life." That was a little foreshadowing. That happened 30 years ago, so who knows what's going to happen 30 years from now.

Chris Azzopardi is the editor of Q Syndicate, the international LGBT wire service.

Chamber on the move

By Bill Krenz

CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA GAY AND LESBIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Chamber Announces Major Leadership Reorganization

The board of directors of the Central Pennsylvania Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (CPGLCC) recently announced major leadership changes resulting from their 5th Year Anniversary Jan. 28 annual board meeting when elections are held.

Keynote speaker was John J. 'SKI' Sygielski, HACC president. Outgoing president Russ Boggs recognized two board members for their service: treasurer Shannon R. Shupp and Shannon Leonard.

After five years at the chamber's helm, Russ Boggs has stepped down as president and CEO. Boggs build the chamber from the beginning with $200 of seed money and making the organization a vibrant, growing success story. Boggs continues his involvement as treasurer.

Deb McClain, uFinancial, Insurance Representative for Mass Mutual, was elected to serve as president and CEO. McClain has served on the board three years, and has been an integral part of the organization.

"It is a great honor to continue the work of advocacy, education, and partnerships to advance the economic interests of LGBT owned and allied business, working toward long term sustainability for our members," McClain said.

Boggs said, "The chamber is in a very good place as it continues its mission to advocate for the LGBT and allied business community. I believe that refreshing the leadership of an organization contributes to its health and I am happy to continue my support as it builds business and creates community."

Additional members elected to the 2012 executive board are vice president, Seth Hamill, Sales Manager of Charter Homes & Neighborhoods; and secretary Debbie Gable, director of education for Planned Parenthood of Central Pennsylvania. The new executive board has over 13 years of experience combined in chamber leadership activities which will continue to solidify its expansion in the region.

At the Jan. 28 board meeting, The National Director Affiliate Relations and External Affairs of the National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, Sam McClure, attended and assisted in the facilitation of this critical reorganization meeting and strategy session.

McClure said, "This board of directors is clearly committed to the doing hard work that it will take to continue to develop and maintain a strong and sustainable organization. This is a very impressive group of leaders and I strongly encourage local LGBT and Allied business owners and professionals to explore ways to get involved."

A new 'Community Service' committee was formed and will be chaired by Heidi Duckworth, Financial Advisor with the Gibson Luckenbill Group of RBC Wealth Management. Membership will be lead by newly elected board member Hava Pell, uFinancial, Insurance Representative for Mass Mutual. Pell is the first "ally" to be elected to the board.

Debbie Gable will continue to lead the Education and Programs Committee. Seth Hamill will chair the Events/Mixers/Annual Meeting Committee. Bill Krenz, Hewlett Packard, will continue to lead the Public Relations and Marketing Committee. As treasure, Boggs will lead the Finance Committee.

Newly elected board member Brenda Dersham, of Hershey Entertainment & Resorts, will specialize her board role as the web master for the chamber as she continues with the recent revamping of the chamber's web site.

Future Events

March 7, 7 a.m. - "Fear of Failure – Face Your Fear and Move Forward" presented by Myles Miller, CEO and founder of LEADUP and Learning Breaks, Harrisburg Regional Chamber Offices. Register for the event at the chamber web site.

March 22, 6-8 p.m. - Chamber Mixer hosted by Lancaster's AideM Media Solutions.

April 12, 6 p.m. there is a Financial and Estate planning seminar and chamber Mixer at the Lancaster Arts Hotel. Heidi Duckworth, Financial Advisor with the Gibson Luckenbill Group of RBC Wealth Management will present with Sandra Edwards Gray, an attorney with Pyfer Partners.

If interested in hosting an event, contact Seth Hamill, shamill@cpglcc.org.

Business Calendar

There will soon be a new business calendar that allows chamber members to post their business events to the web site calendar.

Info: www.cpglcc.org

Open Stage continued from page 25

"8" had its much-heralded Broadway world premiere on September 19, 2011, at the sold-out Eugene O'Neill Theatre in New York City. The production brought in over one million dollars to support AFER's efforts to achieve full federal marriage equality.

Open Stage executive artistic director Donald L. Alsedek will helm the production and the reading will feature many professional actors from the region and beyond.

Open Stage is one of 38 other theatres nation-wide that have been chosen to produce the reading. Partnering with the LGBT Community Center Coalition of Central PA's Executive Director Louie Marven, Open Stage education director Anne Alsedek is creating a talkback and Q&A following the reading.

Info: May 6, 7 p.m., Angino Family Theatre, 223 Walnut St., located on the street level of the Walnut Street Parking Garage in downtown Harrisburg. Admission $15, call 717-232-OPEN (6736) or openstagehbg.com.

Lancaster Symphony Orchestra Offers Symphony in a Snap!

Lancaster Symphony Orchestra now offers a new concert program for the busy professional that combines networking, social media and symphonic music. The program launched in February as "Symphony in a Snap!" The evenings offer a one-hour, evening performance which features a pre-concert networking reception, a smart phone-friendly concert, open-seating policy, and more.

The next "Snap" performances are April 12 and May 17 at the Fulton Opera House.

Symphony in a Snap! begins at 6:15 PM with a pre-concert catered reception, including appetizers, wine, beer and non-alcoholic refreshments, during which attendees can mingle with fresh talent from the orchestra. The performance begins at 7:15 p.m. Attendees have the opportunity to choose their own seats and may use their smart phones and Twitter to follow the Symphony's audience-generated Tweets during the performance. Tweets from a symphony staff member will include informative comments on the selections being performed. After the one-hour concert, attendees may continue their evening at the symphony's selected hospitality partner and receive a discount by presenting their concert ticket stub.

The one-hour performances are excerpts from the Symphony's Classic Concert Series. April 12 features Beethoven's Symphony No. 8. Other highlights include Breiner's Elvis Goes Baroque with trumpet soloist Rodney Mack followed by Copland's Appalachian Spring.

Student Survey *- UCLA's Higher Education Research Institute reports that results from a 2011 survey of more than 200,000 incoming college freshmen indicates students at the four year colleges were generally more liberal on marriage equality, abortion and legalizing marijuana than they were two years ago. 71% of college freshmen believe same sex couples should be able to legally get married, up from 64% in 2009. Regarding abortion, 61% believe in a women's right of choice, up from 58% 2010. On legalizing marijuana, 49% believe it should be legal, up 3%.*

Cheltenham Township Law

continued from page one

Shanker said, "passing the ordinance makes it clear "discrimination against anyone, including LGBT people, is simply unwelcome" and that "discrimination is not a value of this community." The measure applies to employment, housing, and public accommodation. The township is the 27th municipality in the state to pass such an ordinance, although the state's three largest cities – Altoona, Wilkes-Barre, and Williamsport – do not.

Most recently, Susquehanna Township (Dauphin County), Jenkintown Borough and Whitemarsh Township, both in Montgomery County, passed protective ordinances, preceded by Bethlehem. The complete list includes: Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Allentown, Erie (County), Allegheny (County), Reading, Scranton, Bethlehem, Lancaster (City), Harrisburg, York, State College, Easton, Newton Borough, Swarthmore, Lower Merion Township, West Chester, New Hope, Landsdown, Doylestown, Conshohocken, Haverford, Springfield Township, and Montgomery County.

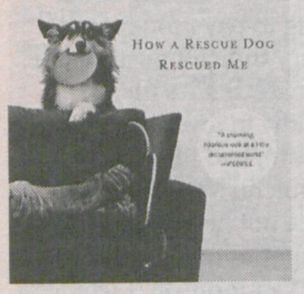
"We are really just doing what state legislators have told us to do all along on non-discrimination," Equality PA executive director Ted Martin told Central Voice in previous stories. "Pass local ordinances and that will build grassroots pressure on us to act they say. So we have made passing ordinances a top priority and we wanted 25 on the books by 2012," he said.

book review

By Lewis Maurer
Dauphin County Library System

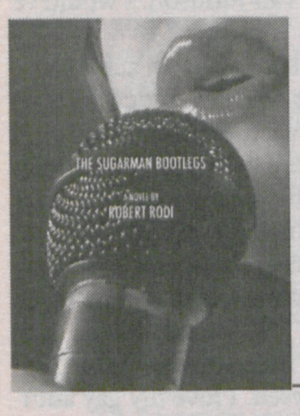
Rescued Pups, Savoring Italians & Boozy Divas

Wonder what the author of "Fag Hag" has been doing lately? You won't be disappointed; Robert Rodi hasn't lost his touch:



Dogged Pursuit: My Year of Competing Dusty, the World's Least Likely Agility Dog – nonfiction (2009)
An urban intellectual and a scruffy, disobedient Sheltie team up to conquer the Canine Agility pro-circuit in this hysterical account of the quest for glory in the competitive dog world.

Seven Seasons in Siena: My Quixotic Quest for Acceptance Among Tuscany's Proudest People – nonfiction (2011)
By turns hilarious and heartwarming, and redolent with the flavor of the Tuscan countryside, Seven Seasons in Siena opens a window on daily life in one of the most magical regions in all of Italy—revealing the joys to be found when we stop being spectators and start taking an active part in life's rich pageant.



The Sugarman Bootlegs - E-book edition only (2011)
The Sugarman Bootlegs reads like the bastard child of All About Eve and Frankenstein. It's a highly addictive cross-cultural mash-up as only Robert Rodi could do it.

The 2012 CPGLCC Board of Directors, from left to right: Bill Krenz, HP; Deb McClain, chamber president and CEO, Mass Mutual Insurance; Hava Pell, Mass Mutual Insurance; Seth Hamill, chamber vice president, Charter Homes & Neighborhoods; Debbie Gable, chamber secretary, Planned Parenthood of Central Pa.; Heidi Duckworth, Gibson Luckenbill Group of RBC Wealth Management, Brenda Dersham, Hershey Entertainment and Resorts; and Russ Boggs, chamber treasurer.

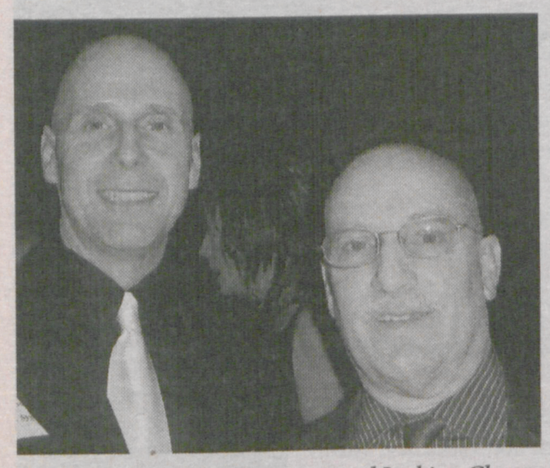
Legislators Form Equality Caucus

Co-chaired by longtime allies State Rep. Dan Frankel, D-Allegheny, Rep. Babette Josephs, D-Phila.; and Sen. Daylin Leach, D-Montgomery/Delaware, have formed a 26-member, LGBT Equality Caucus in the state legislature.

The first caucus of its kind in the state, the idea was suggested to a number of legislators by Equality Pennsylvania. The group is dedicated solely to educating legislators on the lives and challenges facing the state's LGBT taxpayers as well as being a voice on equality issues within the legislature.

The caucus's formal mission "is to promote lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) equality. By serving as a resource for Members of the General Assembly, their staff, and the public on LGBT issues, the Caucus will work toward the extension of equal rights, the repeal of discriminatory laws, the elimination of hate-motivated violence, and the improved health and well-being for all regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression."

Caucus members are: Frankel, Josephs, Leach, and Reps. Matthew Smith, D-Allegheny; Ronald Buxton, D-Dauphin; Michael Sturla, D-Lancaster; Eugene DePasquale, D-York; Tina Davis and Steven Santarsiero, D-Bucks; Matthew Bradford, Timothy Briggs and Michael Gerber, all D-Montgomery; Lawrence Curry, D-Montgomery/Phila.; Joseph Brennan, D-Lehigh/Northampton; Brendan Boyle and Pamela DeLissio, both D-Phila./Montgomery; Kevin Boyle, Vanessa Lowery Brown, Mark Cohen, Michael McGeehan, Michael O'Brien, Cherelle Parker, Tony Payton and James Roebuck, all D-Phila.; and Sens. Jim Ferlo, D-Allegheny/Westmoreland/Armstrong, and Lawrence Farnese, D-Phila.



The Central Pennsylvania Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce Jan. 21 celebrated its fifth year with an annual dinner and remarks by John J. "Ski" Sygielski, president, Harrisburg Area Community College. Left, Sygielski, Russ Boggs, who served as president of the organization since its inception five years ago. Many credit Boggs' leadership and ability to work with others as the basis of the organization's success. Wrapping up the evening was Lancaster-born comedian Suzanne Westenhoefer.
Central Voice photo

What Is the History of Marriage Anyway?

The movement for marriage equality in the United States stands on the shoulders of a centuries-long Chinese tradition, according to new information published by Rainbow Rumpus, the online magazine for kids and teens with LGBT parents. The article, visible at http://www.rainbowrumpus.org/kids/golden-orchid-society, details the history of marriages between female silk makers who then adopted female children.

"This information sheds new light on the history of LGBT-headed families and the role that traditional marriage has played in supporting those families," said Laura Matanah, Executive Director of Rainbow Rumpus. "The two million children growing up with same sex parents in the United States today will receive a wide variety of rights and protections when same-sex marriage is legalized. It's important for them—and for all of us—to know about this history."

A related storybook for children, "Grandpa Dragon and My Peach Tree Moms," is available for free download at http://www.rainbowrumpus.org/htm/printable.htm. The delightful tale shares the story of Bao, a young girl being raised by an aging dragon. Grandpa Dragon decides he must find her a human family, and the two embark on a search for the right parents. The book contains questions and activities to help children explore related themes such as family relationships, fabric making, and dragon stories from a variety of cultural traditions.

The article and the book are both written by author Rene Ohana. Grandpa Dragon is the sixth title in Rainbow Rumpus's Printable Picture Book Series. Each book tells a story about a child with lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender parents and gives parents and teachers tools for talking about family diversity. Rainbow Rumpus's website also has a variety of articles written by and for kids and teens addressing the issue of marriage equality.

Rainbow Rumpus is the primary publisher of LGBT family fiction in the United States, publishing more new fiction each year than all other publishers combined. Noted authors Marion Dane Bauer (Newbery Award), Nancy Garden (Margaret A. Edwards Award), Gregory Maguire (author of Wicked), and Jacqueline Woodson (Newbery honor) sit on the organization's author advisory board. Rainbow Rumpus executive director, Laura Matanah, a former elementary school teacher, was named a top-ten educator in the United States by Curve, the nation's best-selling lesbian magazine. Visit www.rainbowrumpus.org for more information.
Contact: Laura Matanah, 612.721.6442, lauramatanah@rainbowrumpus.org

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Continued from page one

Joan Takes Off The Face

What are we in for with the second season of "Joan & Melissa: Joan Knows Best"?

There's an uber-WASP friends of ours who turns Jewish; Melissa breaking up with the boyfriend; taking (my grandson) Cooper to New York, and he gets lost. All of which is true. Things happen that are just fabulous. If you liked the first season of "Joan Knows Best", you're going to love the second season.

You get more plastic surgery during the first episode, Skintervention. And Melissa does not approve.

No, she totally doesn't. But you know, it's a business where we all have to look good. You look at anybody – I mean, Jane Fonda running around with a whole new face and body and pretending she's done that through eating apples? You wanna go, "Oh, stop it!"

You didn't get that face from eating apples?

I got this face from eating artichokes and apples and having a great diet. Yeah, right. All the above – plus a great doctor!

And the freebies you take from hotels.

That helps, too. That makes you happy.

What do you think you'd look like without plastic surgery?

I imagine I'd look a lot like my sister, and that worries me – because she looks good! *(Laughs)*

You've wasted all that money, Joan.

It could well be. I could have myself really nice outfits.

What don't they tell you about plastic surgery?

Oh, I don't know. I don't listen. I have a friend who wanted to know everything the doctor was going to do. I don't want to know. He doesn't ask me how I write jokes and I don't ask him how he operates. The less I know, the better.

Right. That's with a lot of things. Like Katy Perry.

I'm trying like hell. She's very pretty but I don't get the music.

You're not in a teenage dream?

No, not in a teenage dream. *(Laughs)*

What do you listen to?

I hate to tell you: show tunes. You could sing it and I could tell you where it's from. Yeah, show tunes my whole life. My housekeeper goes, "Ew, here comes the score of "Bells Are Ringing". Err!"

"Joan & Melissa: Joan Knows Best" is in its second season and –

It's done. Thank god! But things never stop happening, that's the trouble.

With you they don't, because you're a workaholic.

Yeah, you're right. I just went down to Williamsburg, Va. with Judge Judy and I thought, "Where are the cameras?" It might be in the third season. Things are always happening.

You recently joked about wishing you could replace Melissa with a gay son. How would the reality show be different if that were true?

Well, it'd be a lot of different. We'd have a whole episode devoted to Judy Garland. There'd be nothing to discuss here.

Maybe even a whole season.

A whole season on, "Was Judy happy?"

What does Joan know best?

Being a good grandma. (Cooper) will appreciate me after I'm dead a lot more. Right now I'm grandma, but later on when he's in college with his friends, he'll get how fun grandma was. She was not cool – that's the wrong word – but she was crazy.

Is anything off limits when the cameras are rolling?

No. If you're going to do a reality show, you have to show your real reality, otherwise it's gonna be stupid. And they know, people are not that – well, I shouldn't say that, because look at the Kardashians. So people are not, usually, that stupid.

Anyone you won't make fun of?

No. If you're in the public eye, you're in the public eye. And you have no right to say "I'm off limits." Nonsense. Then you're in the wrong business. Go work at Kmart and no one will care and you can have the most private life of anyone in the world.

In the '80s you became the permanent guest host on "The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson". Why don't we have a woman hosting a late-night talk show on a major network currently?

Because there just isn't anyone good enough. Somebody that was great would be on. I don't know what that means, but that's what it means.

How about Kathy Griffin or Chelsea Handler?

Chelsea: I've never seen so I have nothing to say about her. Never watched the show but once and I thought, "This sucks." And I don't know if Kathy would want to do it, or even has the right equipment for it. It's a very different hat to put on.

So you're saying it has nothing to do with gender but rather talent?

It's the talent. That's why I think Jimmy Fallon is genius. He's got what Carson had. He's a fan, he lets his people be funny; he doesn't compete with his guests, and he just sits back and lets the guest do it. He's amazing.

What about Ellen DeGeneres?

Ellen is the most boring white woman in the world.

But the most exciting lesbian in the world?

Oh, that's right. I forgot about that. One of the funniest episodes of her sitcom was when she announced it by mistake over the microphone.

When I saw your 2010 documentary, "A Piece of Work", I was really surprised by how much of a softie you can be.

Everybody is. You show so many different things on stage. My act is one kind of talk. In real life, I can be something else. We're all so different in different ways.

So, what's Joan like off-camera?

I like to cry a lot.

What makes you cry?

What doesn't? Christmas carols make me cry.

In "Driftwood", you played Barbra Streisand's –

Lesbian lover!

Would you go lesbian again?

If Babs is available. She was an amazing kisser! We still both laugh because that was our first scene – for both of us. She was still in high school.

You were aware of your gay following early on, while performing at clubs in Greenwich Village. Why did you connect with gay people so instantly?

I didn't purposefully connect with them. It was always there. I worked all through college decorating Lord & Taylor windows, and all the window display men were gay. We loved each other. I think my humor has always been a gay kind of humor. Gay humor is the smartest humor in the world. And gay audiences make a show. If I look out in an audience and there are six gay men in the front row, I know we're going to have fun tonight.

You used to get a lot of flack for some of your jokes – especially ones about AIDS. Is it easier to joke about taboo topics like that now?

Oh, of course. But that's the way you get people to pay attention. You know, I did the first AIDS benefit when it was still called "gay pneumonia." We were in such danger that we had men on stage carrying guns because we got death threats.

You ruffled some feathers recently when you told the Advocate that gay actors should stay in the closet because they were committing career suicide.

You are. If I knew Tom Cruise was gay when I was a 7-year-old girl, that would've been it. I would've put my fantasies on somebody else.

Tom Cruise is gay?

Oh, I don't think so. Do you?

You tell me. You're the celeb guru.

I don't know. You hear so many rumors circulating. But I think in certain professions you can't come out and be America's romantic idol. Ricky Martin was brilliant in how he handled his career.

But with the social climate changing, do you still believe that to be true?

You're not talking about that. You're talking about somebody that young girls are going to pay money to see and fantasize about. I think it's a very difficult position for somebody to be put in. It's unfortunate, but it's life.

When I was a child, I was madly in love with an actor named Van Johnson – mad about him, had his picture up. In third grade I did a whole notebook on Van Johnson. Then I grew up, he was still adorable but he was gay and he was wearing mascara and I thought to myself, "If I had known then, I wouldn't have loved Van Johnson. I would've fallen for John Wayne."

So, I think it's a very difficult choice for an actor to make if he's going to make his living as a romantic lead for young girls to adore. Or women. Well, men like to challenge women. Men love to challenge a lesbian: "Oh, I could turn her around." That's a good challenge for a man.

As someone who's had a gay following for years, what do you think of people claiming that Lady Gaga and Kathy Griffin pander to gay audiences and aren't actually genuine?

I don't know and I don't care. How about that? Couldn't care less. I worry about myself. I love my gay audiences. They've been with me forever, they'll stay with me forever, and I'm very happy. It's that simple.

> ***If I look out in an audience and there are six gay men in the front row, I know we're going to have fun tonight.***

Prince Poppycock Talks:

By Frank Pizzoli

Central Voice: The Prince Poppycock background story is entertaining, but also startling. Is this your creative metaphor for the shape of the world today?

Prince Poppycock: I'm very much a Gemini, so the story of the Gemini myth has always been a source of inspiration to me. Two brothers - one mortal, one immortal - bound together in eternity. I like to think of the brothers as symbols for dark and light. The Poppycock Myth is really the tale of personal journey, through the end of a fantastical civilization.

CV: Equate the Poppycock vision to today.

PP: I have always loved to think about the fall of civilizations, ever since first learning about Rome in school. It's kind of the one lesson history teaches us over and over again. The hubris that most people live their lives with is completely absurd today. We are these weird shaved monkeys that have plucked themselves into a cartoon made of flesh and we seem to think that the way that we live our lives is so important that we fight each other over it till the point of death.

CV: Dire as it may be, you are deeply inspired to tell the story, aren't you?

PP: I want to make the legend of Prince Poppycock a fable for the modern age - one that hopefully I will really get the chance to tell someday soon, whether it be as a stage production, a movie, or as a children's book.

CV: Your character mask for Poppycock allows you to say whatever you want in the tradition of Commedia dell'arte. What do you want to say to your audiences?

PP: I want to remind them that none of us really know what's happening...ever. Don't pretend like you do. Don't judge anyone, especially not yourself. It's really not a good look. I especially want everyone to remember that every moment that we get to be alive is a miracle, so don't take a second of it for granted.

CV: In the spirit of The Black and White Party, what can individuals do to influence the world?

PP: I think Ghandi said it best: "You must be the change you wish to see in the world".

All that any of us are in control of is our choices. If you want to see a better world, it starts with you. Be conscious, and keep breathing!

CV: HIV/AIDS is an important social issue for you because…

PP: I think that HIV/AIDS research and treatment has made some wonderful strides. However, what I find lacking is a breaking down of its stigma. I have several beautiful friends living amazing lives with HIV/AIDS now, and that's a huge blessing. But the stigma still persists, both from within the community and from the outside. And the true facts of the World AIDS epidemic are still obscured by our own country's prejudice. Even our government doesn't allow a blood donation from a homosexual man, irrelevant of his HIV status, mainly because as a whole demographic we are judged according to this stigma. Beyond finding a better treatment; a vaccine; and a cure for this particular condition, I would hope that as a culture we can move past the stigmatization of any disease, and only approach them scientifically, and not with social fear and emotional irrationality.

CV: By raising funds to help those living with HIV/AIDS, how can the Black and White audience add to, keep alive the Poppycock tradition?

PP: There is no need to judge, or feel separate from another individual. If it weren't for the grace of God none of us would be here. Each of us was drawn up by a bucket one by one from the exact same source, and any illusion to the contrary is merely that. I believe, like our founding fathers, that each of us has the exact same worth as everyone else. Despite this, most members of our society think that their all-consuming artifice makes them special. Well let me tell you it absolutely doesn't, it just makes you a giant bore in my book.

CV: So it's about change not stuff?

PP: Creating effective change for good is all any of us can ever aspire to; it's the highest calling that all of us have. This is what The Black and White Party and many other efforts like it are doing. Life only means something when you choose it to. If you want it to mean something, then creating the kind of help, opportunity and social change that you see the need for can be that meaning. I beseech everyone to remember that they aren't powerless, and that they deserve to have their voices heard.

CV: Any secrets to share with your fan base here in Central Pennsylvania?

PP: For a taste of what my nemesis Castor Pollux has in store, please check out the album WorldvieW by John Quale (Prince Poppycock), available now.

Marven Named Center Executive Director

Louie Marven
Central Voice photo

Louie Marven has been part of the picture since 2008 when he first joined the effort at the LGBT Community Center Coalition of Central Pennsylvania. Now he serves as executive director.

He takes over the reigns of an organization poised to fortify their longstanding youth programs popular for years throughout the region. In addition to youth programs, the center is building a brand on the other end of the spectrum through services for older individuals.

Marven tells Central Voice the center's been "gaining a lot of steam with our aging program, CPLAN, and people should know that 2011 was just a start." First the center had to orchestrate ways to locate and reach out to older LBGT individuals. "In 2012, we're taking it to the next level," Marven said.

A Medical Equipment Loan Closet started up last month through collaboration with Harrisburg's Metropolitan Community Church. "The foundation has been laid for us to hold a Pride event specifically for seniors," Marven said. The event will be held indoors the Friday of Harrisburg's Pride weekend.

"We are methodically and intentionally building CPLAN's capacity," Marven said. Without paid staff designated specifically to aging initiatives, "we will need dedicated volunteers to push this important initiative forward."

Collaboration with existing organizations to strengthen both efforts has proven beneficial for the center and collaborators. Marven's goal is to keep the momentum going. "I want to continue building creative and mutually-benefitting relationships with other organizations in our region," he said.

For Metropolitan Community Church collaborating with the center has made a measureable difference.

"Working with CPLAN has been a wonderful experience. It is truly a blessing to work with another group of folks who whole-hearted believe in helping those in need. This is an opportunity for us, at MCC, to put our beliefs into action by helping others in the community," MCC Pastor Lori Rivera told Central Voice.

In 2009 the center merged operations with Common Roads and now has weekly youth meetings in Carlisle, Harrisburg, and Lancaster. Last year their educational programs took the center to Annville, Duncannon, East Pennsboro, Fawn Grove, and Shippensburg. "We're already all over the region, and will continue to grow that presence.

In 2010 the center became the fiscal sponsor of Lancaster Pride. "I think there are other opportunities to work together in formal ways like these examples, or in less formal ways like partnering on specific projects with a common purpose," Marven said. The center has, for example, successfully partnered with TransCentralPA on an annual youth dance and the Transgender Day of Remembrance.

Central Voice asked Marven if having a "center" is a realistic goal since the organization serves such a huge geographic area that covers Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Lancaster, Lebanon, Perry, and York counties. Perhaps the center needs an "administrative office location" through which it organizes programs in existing facilities in the eight counties it serves?

"Having a physical location operating as a center is still very much a goal the organization, and is additionally a personal goal of mine," Marven explains. "It's a challenge to stay conscious of our huge geographic area but I'm proud of how we've held that as a priority."

Equality PA, a statewide organization, keeps a Harrisburg office in the center's current location. "There is great opportunity to have other partner organizations housed in our future facility," Marven said, although he notes "having satellite facilities in various places across the region is ideal but a ways off." Marven feels strongly that "having a home base with drop in hours and meeting space would really strengthen our community."

Central Voice asked Marven if there's a planning process in place based on reader feedback that the center's needs assessment and planning documents had grown old and irrelevant.

"The center's initial strategic plan is outdated, and the board and I have identified creating a new strategic plan as a high priority in 2012," Marven said, adding that a strategic planning weekend is for late April. Terry Stone, executive director, CenterLink, is engaged to lead the process. CenterLink's mission is to develop strong, sustainable LGBT community centers. The local center is a member making the service free.

Not all organizations have any affinity for all things LGBT.

Central Voice asked Marven about the difference between working within the gay community and working with non-gay, sometimes opposing organizations to create change.

"I believe that real change happens when we have a healthy, connected, and empowered LGBT community, and when we are thoughtfully engaging the broader community to understand and support our goals," Marven reflected. "That's an exciting part of the work for me."

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Harrisburg Shakespeare Company Present Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead

Harrisburg Shakespeare Company will present Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead by Tom Stoppard which will run Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays from March 9-25, at Gamut Classic Theatre, located at 605 Strawberry Square, Downtown Harrisburg.

Acclaimed as a modern dramatic masterpiece, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead is the fabulously inventive tale of Hamlet as told from the worm's-eye view of the bewildered Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, two minor characters in Shakespeare"s play. In Tom Stoppard"s best-known work, this Shakespearean Laurel and Hardy finally get a chance to take the lead role, but do so in a world where reality and illusion intermix and where fate leads our two heroes to a tragic but inevitable end.

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern is directed by guest director, Dan Burke. His concept for the show focuses on time, the character's lack of direction, and life and death. The two main characters, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, are minor characters in Shakespeare's Hamlet. They have no (or take no) control over their situation, thus they have nowhere to go and are waiting for life or death to come to them.

Gamut Theatre Group is led by Artistic Director Clark Nicholson and Executive Director Melissa Nicholson.

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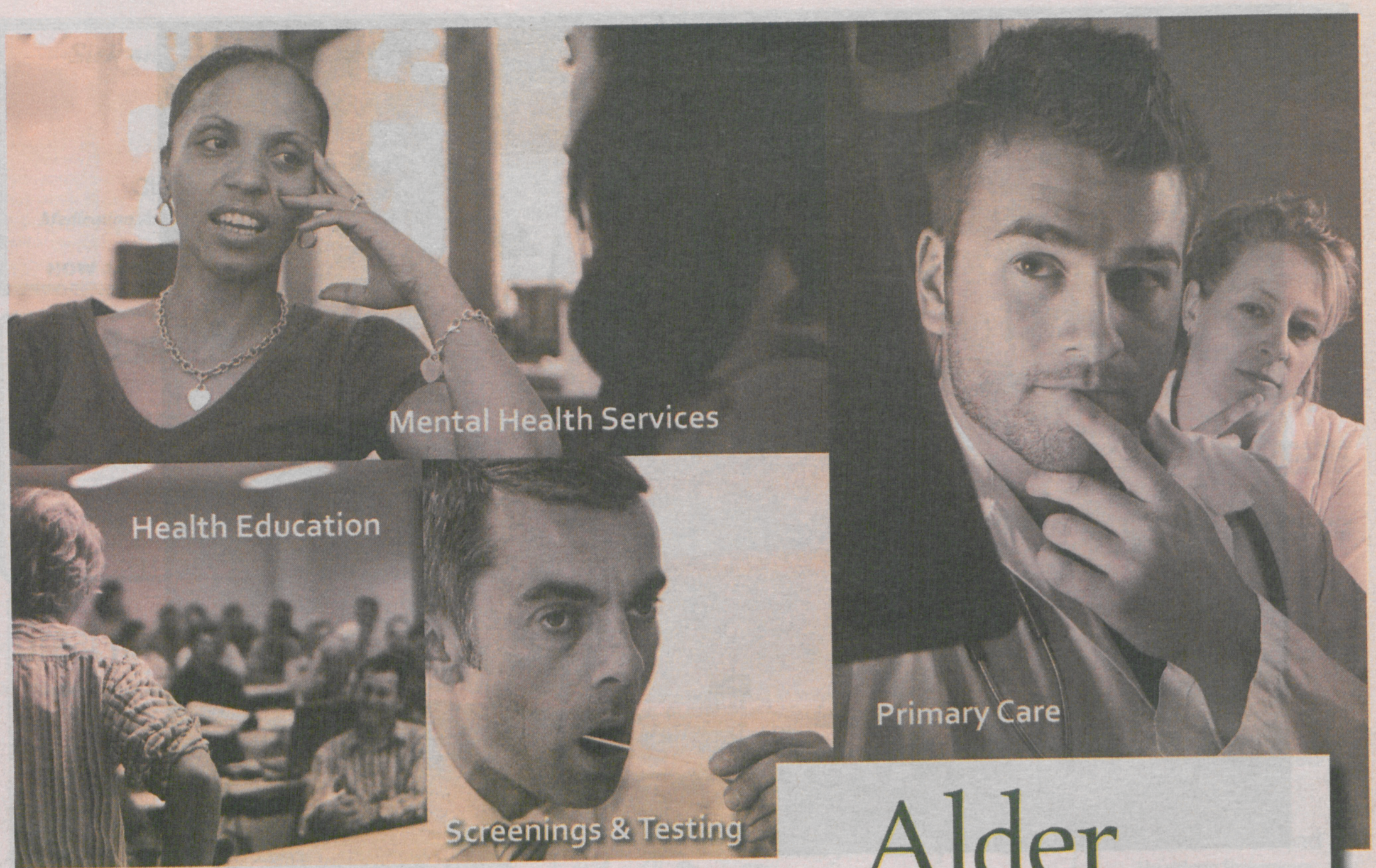

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